

SPECTRUM

AMBIENT/INDUSTRIAL/EXPERIMENTAL MUSIC CULTURE MAGAZINE

ISSUE 1

MAUGNANT RECORDS

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THE PROTAGONIST

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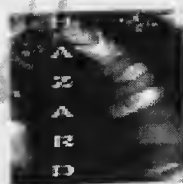
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EDITORIAL

WELCOME TO THE FIRST INSTALLMENT OF SPECTRUM. IN YOUR HANDS YOU HOLD MY DEBUT EFFORT AT A PUBLICATION SO I HOPE YOU FIND IT WORTH-WHILE. AFTER BEING INVOLVED PREVIOUSLY WITH A FRIEND'S LAW-ZINE AND ANOTHER MUSIC GENRE I FINALLY GOT INSPIRED TO CREATE A DOCUMENT OF THE MUSIC AND ARTISTS THAT I HAVE IMMENSELY ENJOYED OVER A PERIOD OF TIME. AS YOU WILL SEE THERE IS A SPECIFIC FOCUS ON THE STYLES OF MUSIC CONTAINED WITHIN AND IT IS INTENDED TO KEEP TRAVELLING IN THIS DIRECTION HOWEVER DUALITY OF MUSIC/ SOUNDS WILL ALWAYS BE THE PRECURSOR FOR INCLUSION. THE MAIN BASIS OF THE MAGAZINE IS ESSENTIALLY A 'ZINE' I HAVE ATTEMPTED TO BEAR THE LINE BETWEEN THE CUT AND PASTE PHOTOCOPY JOBS AND ENHANCED COMMERCIAL MAGAZINES. ALTHOUGH I AM EXTREMELY PLEASED WITH THE RESULTS HEREIN BOTH TEXT & IMAGE VISUALS THERE IS ALWAYS ROOM FOR SELF CRITICISM AND IMPROVEMENT. AS COMPUTER PACKAGES PROGRESS ALONG WITH MY DIGITAL SKILLS MY WORKS ARE A COMPUTER GENIUS SO WILL THE LAYOUT AND PRESENTATION. I ANTICIPATED THIS ISSUE TO BE OUT WITHIN A MONTH OF ITS MENTAL CONCEPTION, HOWEVER THAT BLEW OUT TO A FIFTEEN OVER FIVE. . . JUST GOES TO SHOW AMBITION AND ENHANCE RESULTS SO OFTEN DEFEAT. GIVEN THIS, THERE WILL BE NO SPECIFIC TIMEFRAME FOR THE RELEASE OF SUBSEQUENT ISSUES - ONLY WHEN THE RIGHT ARTISTS ARE CONTACTED AND I AM SATISFIED WITH THE RESULTS. GIVEN TIME CONSTRAINTS CAUSED BY FULL TIME PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYMENT IT IS OFTEN DIFFICULT TO FIND SPARE TIME TO WORK ON A PUBLICATION LIKE THIS, SO IF ANY OF YOU READERS ARE INTERESTED IN CONTRIBUTING CONTENT GET IN CONTACT AND PUT FORTH YOUR IDEAS. PLEASE REMEMBER THAT I WILL ALWAYS BE THE OVERALL DIRECTION OF THE MAGAZINE SO ANY PROSPECTIVE CONTRIBUTORS WILL HAVE TO ACCURATELY FIT INTO MY VISION. ANY REQUESTS FROM LABELS AND ARTISTS WILL BE GRACIOUSLY ACCEPTED AND WILL MORE THAN LIKELY RECEIVE A REVIEW IN BE IT GOOD OR BAD IN SUBSEQUENT ISSUES. IF YOUR WORKING, THE ENCLOSURE ADVERTISEMENTS WERE PROVIDED FREE OF CHARGE FOR THE LABELS AS A MEANS FOR ME TO NETWORK THIS THING TO GET IT OFF THE GROUND. THIS MAY CHANGE IN FUTURE ISSUES, BUT BY IMPLEMENTING A CHARGE IT WILL HELP OFFSET THE COST OF PRINTING WHICH AGAIN WOULD RESULT IN MORE COPIES BEING PRODUCED AND BEING MORE WIDELY AVAILABLE. . . A FAVORABLE SITUATION FOR ALL. IF YOU HAVE ANYTHING INTERESTING TO SAY (ESPECIALLY WORDS OF PRAISE) OR IF YOU WANT TO OBTAIN WHOLESALE COPIES FOR YOUR SHOP/WHOLE-ORDER PLEASE DON'T HESITATE TO GET IN CONTACT. BEFORE I FORGET THERE IS THE OBVIOUS DISCLAIMER - "ALL OPINIONS EXPRESSED ARE NOT NECESSARILY THE SAME VIEWS HELD BY THE EDITOR". IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH ANY OF IT DON'T COME BOTHERING ME WITH YOUR COMPLAINTS. ENOUGH OF MY RAMBLING, JUST SIT BACK AND ENJOY THE READ. RICHARD STEVENSON — SEPTEMBER 1998

SPECTRUM

AMBIENT/INDUSTRIAL/EXPERIMENTAL MUSIC CULTURE MAGAZINE

ISSUE 1

EDITOR/INTERVIEWER /
REVIEWER/LAYOUT DESIGNER/
COVER IMAGE ETC.

RICHARD STEVENSON

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JAMES LESLIE FOR TECHNICAL SUPPORT & ASSISTANCE - IF WITHOUT THIS ISSUE WOULD NOT HAVE EVENTUATED, SCOTT VAN DORT FOR THE INSPIRATION TO GET THIS MAGAZINE OFF THE GROUND, JASON MANTIS FOR THE FREE ITEMS AND QUALITY RECOMMENDATIONS, MAGNUS SUMSTROM FOR SUPPLY OF SELECTED IMAGES, THE ARTISTS/ INDIVIDUALS WHO CONTRIBUTED INTERVIEWS AND FOR THE LABELS WHICH HAVE SHOWN INTEREST IN THIS MAGAZINE THUS FOR MALIGNANT RECORDS, CROWD CONTROL ACTIVITIES, RED STRAW, CODE SPRING, SELF ABUSE RECORDS. ALL THOSE FORGOTTEN - OUT OF SIGHT OUT OF MIND.....

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MALIGNANT R E C O R D S

Within the underground music scene there are always individuals who believe enough in the music they enjoy to put their money where their mouth is (...so to speak), and run an active campaign of promotion through record labels & 'zines (hey that would also include me....!). Here is an interview presented with one Jason Mantis of Malignant Records (also formally of Audio Drudge magazine). Malignant Records is a label that has quickly gained recognition for releasing the music of respected artists within the general fields of ambience & industrial.

Jason I would like to welcome you to the first issue of Spectrum. Please introduce yourself, your music label and the intentions for its general activities.

Jason Mantis, 29, sole head honcho at Malignant Records in Baltimore Maryland, since 1995. Intentions...I guess world domination is too lofty of a goal, so I'll guess I'll go with to release evocative, dark, sometimes agitating music that's original and worthy of more than 5 spins on the record or CD player! Apart from the running of your music label you previously produced an ambient/ industrial magazine namely Audio Drudge (now defunct) which saw the release of seven issues. One of the great features of the magazine was that each issue included a tape with tracks from the groups interviewed. Was the release of the magazine with the tapes the precursor to the birth of Malignant Records?

Yes, very much so. The original intention was in fact to release a sort of best of Audio Drudge on CD as culled from the cassettes, but I was worried about it lacking the flow I look for in a compilation, thus the idea for Invisible Domains was born. You'll notice that a lot of the bands that appeared on Invisible were the

same that appeared in issues of AD though (Contrastate, Illusion of Safety, Stone Glass Steel, Voice of Eye, Vromb, Maeror Tri, Lull), so in that sense it really was an extension of the magazine. As far as being a precursor to the label...a resounding yes...I don't think I'd have gotten anywhere without the contacts and distribution already in place thanks to the zine! It really was just a natural progression. Why did you choose to discontinue the magazine? (I will say that it was most definitely a gem of a magazine and was almost solely responsible for

enlightening me with a more extensive knowledge of the general ambient/ industrial scene). Do any of your future plans include the production of another magazine in some form or another?

Not to discourage you from producing what will surely be a fine piece of journalism, but magazines pure and simple are a pain in the ass. An exhausting process in which all time loses meaning and the brain turns to jelly just trying to think up new and imaginative things to say about releases. Believe it or not, by the seventh issue I actually

started to plagiarize from my first two issues (based on the premise that I didn't think anyone actually still owned the things!), that's how fried I was getting. So, it really was just a matter of getting burnt out on the whole process and severely lacking the time to devote to another issue (what with the label kicking into full gear, getting married etc etc). Usually, 6 months after an issue came out I found myself itching to do another one, but the last time the inspiration just never came, and I took that as a sign that it was time to pack it in. So, to answer your question, it's very doubtful that there will ever be another issue. Sorry! As I am aware many of the above mentioned tapes included exclusive tracks from the groups as part of their interview contributions. Is there any plan to revisit these tapes for a potential compilation release as a historical document of Audio Drudge's active times?



No, simply because a lot of the submissions I received were on regular chrome cassettes, so the quality would be pretty shoddy. Plus, again, the lack of focus would really drag it down I think...not what I want in a compilation CD.

At what point did you become first become interested in the ambient/ industrial/ experimental field of music and how were you originally introduced to it?

I got into probably around 1988 or so (10 years now...a rather scary thought) from the friend of a girlfriend at the time. He turned me onto some Test Department, SPK, and probably the most influential song of all time for me, Hamburger Lady by Throbbing Gristle. From there I started exploring and discovered things like Jeff Greinke's 'Cities in Fog' LP (now re-issued by Projekt!), some early Illusion of Safety cassettes, Sleep Chamber etc and I was hooked. I still cherish the 'More Violence and Geography'

LP from IOS that I got on a trip to Boston and hold it in high esteem

as one of the greatest industrial LPs of the '80s and '90s.

Anyhow, back in the mid '80s I was still really into death metal, but was growing increasingly bored with the lack of originality and posturing in the scene and was looking for something darker more cerebral, and 'industrial' (or whatever you want to call it) really filled the void.

I believe that Malignant Records had its first release back in 1995 and has since produced a handful of quality CD's and a vinyl EP. I would imagine that you have now gained a respectable reputation within the scene, but how difficult did you find it at the beginning to start a record label and negotiate deals & distribution contracts with established groups/ labels?

Believe it or not, I think I actually had an easier time finding good distribution when I started than I do now...maybe I've become complacent, maybe I've weeded out a lot of the people that didn't pay (which I guess doesn't really constitute good distribution, but it does constitute distribution!), I don't know, but that's just the feeling I get. Sometimes it feels like I'm still trying to establish myself in the grand scheme of things. Part of this may be due to the current, shit-poor state of distribution in the United States, which has really slipped in the last couple of years since I started Ma-

lignant. Soleilmoon pays very little attention to stuff outside their own label, Anomalous has phased out nearly all darker death industrial stuff, and that leaves me with few choices outside of Projekt and Metropolis. Both are decent, but I can't help feeling I'm missing out on a big chunk of my potential audience. Case in point; just a few days ago someone posted a note on one of the internet usegroups asking if Malignant was still around and stated that they hadn't seen anything since Invisible Domains. So really, I thought that said a lot, since Invisible was probably the most widely distributed of all my releases, and yet it was my first release! Unless you get into a huge outfit like Dutch East or Cargo you're stuff really has little chance of making it into stores and out to a broader audience. Sad but true. But you know, I look at a label like CMI or Ant-Zen, that are now up to 70 releases or so and really just starting to gain *full* recognition...so with Malignant only having 9 releases out I guess I really should be happy with the position I'm in.

How good is the distribution of your products? I noticed that from your web page a number of items are out of print. How many copies of each product do you produce and are they specifically limited?

Yes, both Invisible and Yen Pox are now out of print with the Inade 10" going very very close. Distribution in Europe is strong as Malignant seems most widely appreciated there...the US again lags far behind, much to my frustration. So really, what I've tried to do is just

build up the mail order business where I can skip the middle man all together. Slowly but surely it's starting to come to fruition. Most CDs are limited to 1000 copies, and vinyl to 500...though there are exceptions. The Hazard was 1200, the Blood Box CD just 500, and the Stratvm Terror and next Yen Pox will probably be 1500-2000. All depends on the release really. **In relation to CMI, Roger Karmanik plays a pivotal role in the aesthetics and production of the artwork for his releases. What is your involvement in the production and co-ordination of the products that you issue?**

My design sense and skills are fairly sub par so I'm not in the position that Karmanik is, in that I'm able to do all this stuff myself. Thus, I'm at the will of people gracious enough to help me out...usually Phil Easter of Iron Halo Device/Stone Glass Steel and Brett Smith



of Caul. That's not to say I don't oversee, critique and approve everything that's created....just the opposite. Nothing goes out without mine and the bands stamp of approval. I guess I'm lucky to have people working for me that are understanding and committed to doing what I feel is an outstanding job....which makes it that much easier. Outside of the artwork and layout, everything else pretty much rests on my shoulders in terms of distribution and promotion etc etc. **Upcoming released include a disc from Stratvm Terror (of which I highly anticipate) and there is also word of second discs on Malignant from Hazard and Caul. What other products do you have planned for imminent or potential release?** Right...well, next up is the Stratvm Terror, which I'm finishing up right now for a likely June release. It looks really incredible and sounds just as good....can't wait for it to be unleashed.

Following soon after that is a CD from Italy's Cazzo Dio, which will be released on the side label Black Plague, run by my friend Butch Clough and distributed by Malignant. After the Stratvm there's the release of a rare and previously unreleased recording from Stone Glass Steel called 'Dismembering Artists' (nice pounding rhythms

and a dirgey web of recontextualized samples), then follow up CDs from Hazard and Yen Pox. Caul is definitely in the mix sometime in '98 as are releases from Law, C17H19N03, a SALT 10" (look out!), and a Swiss band called Skalpelli. Should be a busy and fruitful year!

What does a group or formation have to possess to gain your interest? Is there any specific quality which must be present for someone to be signed to your label?

Um, I've been asked this before and sort of stumbled through the answer...it's mostly a matter of knowing when I hear it, rather than some concrete trait. I guess I look for a fair degree of professionalism first and foremost....something that doesn't sound like it was created by a bunch of teenagers making a bunch of fucking noise (and believe me, I get tapes of the stuff every week). Secondly, a high amount of texture

and mood...something that's evocative and creative. I like to think that there's a definitive Malignant sound being nurtured, even while the releases may be varied. You'll see this become more evident with some of the upcoming releases this year, I hope at least?! **If you had the opportunity to have released any bands within the genre what releases would you have wanted to put your label name on? (I always find this one of the interesting questions!).** I'm going to narrow this down and not do it so much by certain bands, but particular releases by particular bands...which is basically the same as listing some of my favorite releases: Illusion of Safety - Historical (brilliant music with the packaging to boot), anything and everything from Genocide Organ, Mental Destruction's Straw CD, Deutsch Nepal's 'Deflagration of Hell', and a few others that don't spring to mind immediately.



To date what would you class as your favorite release on your label and who / what group would you ultimately like to release in the future?

You know, a few years ago when I interviewed Karmanik for an issue of Audio Drudge I asked him the same question and his response was 'whatever I'm currently working on is my favorite release'. At the time I didn't quite grasp that concept...but, as I've released more stuff I've found that really to be true, if only because I've got to get myself pumped up to promote the thing, and listening to it a lot and 'convincing' yourself how good it is will help in the process. But, to give you a more concrete answer I think I've got to say that my favorite release to date is the Iron Halo Device, followed by the Orphx. As far as future releases...well, I like to think it's a band that's yet to be discovered, as that's really the premise Malignant was founded on. With the exception of Stratvm Terror and Hazard I really try and go outside of the current scene and find a band no one's ever heard of and help build them into a recognizable name. I could easily have gone the path of least resistance and done some big names from the get go, but that never appealed to me as I wanted to build a solidified roster of bands that people relate to and immediately think of

as a Malignant artist (unlike somebody like Aube or Merzbow, that will spread their legs to any label willing to stick their dick in between!). It's also precisely why Orphx will never have a release on Malignant again). That to me is how you build up a name for true name for yourself and gain a true following...people may not have heard of the the band, but they see that it's on Malignant and have faith in knowing it's probably something they'll enjoy and have a general idea of what to expect. So anyway, there's really no band I could think of I'd like to worth with that I haven't already signed...with the possible exception of doing something like a Genocide Organ 10" maybe?!

In addition to the label you also run a distribution company that sells a wide range of items from a variety of well known and obscure labels. It would appear to me that only the items you really appreciate personally are stocked for sale. Is there any major reason behind this if my assumption is correct?

That's a fair assumption yes...though less so than in the past, since I've tried to build up the number of things I carry. But, I'm still fairly selective and really just try and bring in things that I really enjoy and know other people will enjoy as well. Being able to track down some of the more obscure European releases and offer them to a wider audience is one of the greatest joys and challenges of doing mail order. I've built my reputation on getting those limited edition items and it's what keeps a lot of people coming back in a lot of cases. In one sense, it's all rather selfish because these are items that I want to get my hands on for my personal collection as well, so ordering them wholesale saves me quite a bit of cash in the long run.

What types of people tend to be your biggest customers and are they isolated to certain countries?

The normal assortment of freaks, psychos, degenerates, mass murderers, florists, and hairdressers. No really, most of the people that order big are just kind enthusiasts living normal lives with a penchant for the darker, more extreme side of life. The majority of people ordering can be found within the confines of the U.S., and while I've never really done a demographic study, most of the business comes from California, New York, Washington State, Pennsylvania and believe it or not North and South Carolina (not much else to do down there

I guess). A nice amount of people from the desolation of midwest America too, where I guess there's not much to do outside of staring at rows of corn and listening to The Grey Wolves (sort of a scary thought actually).

I gather that the label stands as a monument to your interest within the given scene, however are you able to make any sort of a living from the label? Is the label a full time job or do you have other full time commitments?

Nah, I don't really have any interest in doing this as my full time job...I have a pretty comfortable standard of living thanks my full time job in the wine business (believe it or not) and doing Malignant full time just wouldn't allow me to up keep that. Not that I'm raking in the dough by any means, but it's nice to have a stable income. I never take any money from Malignant...it all goes right back into the label. The more I make the more I release is the formula I stick to, which allows it to remain tax free and actually means I get some money back come tax time...a beautiful thing really, but I don't know how much longer I'll be able to keep that status!

What does a standard contract involve with the groups you sign? Do they get some royalty or payment or is it simply the pleasure for them to release their music?

Well, I'm not all that comfortable divulging what artists are paid, but they do receive royalty payments, yes. How much depends on the artists demands. Would be nice if it were simply for the pleasure of making music (still looking for that band!), but alas, it wouldn't really be right. **Have all elements of the operations of Malignant been as you planned thus far? Are there any points you would like to change looking back on the labels short history? How do you envisage the label evolving and growing in the future?**

I don't think I'd change too much and I guess the only thing that's never gone as planned has been release dates that I set ...I can look back at some of the early catalogs (a year and half to two years ago) and see myself hyping things that still haven't come out! Pretty sick...but, defi-

MALIGNANT

nately getting better. I don't want to be like CMI or Staalplaat and have three things come out within a weeks time and flood the market because I think that takes away from a release, but once a month or once every two months would be nice. I'd say that I'm pretty much on schedule now (with some glitches) though and hope to continue that. Some things I would have changed would be to have perhaps done some special packaging...not stuck with just the jewel box format, which has me bored to tears at the moment. Also, doing a few more vinyl releases would have been nice. Musically, I wouldn't really change anything, except to maybe have done some more power electronic releases...not so much

dark ambient stuff, which is what most people associate the label with. But, all that will change over the next year or so I hope.. though I'll definitely keep the dark ambient purists happy with releases from Yen Pox and Caul, and to some degree C17H19N03. Where do I see the label going? You know, I've never really thought about it as I'm too caught up with the present to think about the future....I guess I can just hope for better distribution and a wider appreciation of my releases. I always want Malignant to stay firmly entrenched in the underground, but that doesn't mean I don't think there's plenty of room for

growth. Through the interviews I have read in issues 6 & 7 of Audio Drudge it would appear that you embrace and/ or tolerate a wide variety of beliefs however show disdain for politically extreme views. Are you one to be interested in philosophical, political and religious views and if so are there specific traits of though you subscribe too? Um, tough question for me to answer.....as it stands at the present time, I actually think I'm very open to extreme political views but pay very little attention to any of it outside of the musical spectrum. It doesn't mean I condone it or embrace it by any means, but having been through a very angry and hate driven period in

my life I think I can relate better than most. But, I went through a more liberal time in my life too, which I think you'll see in something like issue 6 of Audio Drudge, where I was less forgiving and less open to opposing views. But the pendulum swung back again and now it rests somewhere in the middle, which is a nice safe place to be. For now, I prefer to remain rather complacent in my views on politics and philosophy and rather than stand in the way of someone elses political views, I prefer to just let them speak their mind freely and not stick my nose in places it doesn't belong. What I absolutely detest is a strong ideology not backed up by strong music...and I speak specifically of bands

like Puissance, Blood Axis, and that sort. For Christs sake, if you're going to have a right wing agenda, then make some music with some fucking balls to stand up to it, not that bull shit light weight neo-classical drab. As for religion... bah, if that's your gig, more power to you, just don't shove it my way. Often the individuals behind labels have their own musical projects (Slaughter Productions, Release Entertainment and CMI to name a few). Do you have any interest in having a project of

your own or are you already involved in one? I would love to create some hardcore power electronics stuff (not noise mind you), but lack the finances, time, or resources to devote to it. Someday...but I probably won't put my name on it for obvious reasons, heh

Well thank you Jason for your time, if there any thing that I may have missed speak now or forever (or 'till you die!) hold your piece!? Nope, thanks for the interview and keep spreading the disease!

- J a s o n
M a n t i s



[megaptera]

For me Megaptera was one of those groups that I knew the name but had never got around to buying one of their CD's. A number of years ago I tried to order the 'Disease' CD but gave up as a number of distributor's I order music from were out of stock. Since that time I have now become formally acquainted with the all encompassing industrial darkness of this obscure group. I finally managed to obtain a copy of the 'Disease' CD through the sole member of this group Peter Nystrom which also led to this interview. Here

we go

Being one of the longer standing groups from the early CMI/Sound Source days you still remain one of the more obscure and unknown groups. Can you please give us a history of your involvement in ambient styled music?

I have been making industrial music since 1991, but I don't do it for the fame. Since I started taking music seriously, I also got a big interest in collecting records. My biggest dream in the late 80's was to make a record of my own. That dream now has come true.

How did you first become introduced to the music of the ambient/ industrial scene as opposed to becoming an active member of it? Around 89/90 one of my friends played some new music to me. It was BDN and Controlled Bleeding, I think. I really liked the music, so I joined my friends Mikael Svensson and Magnus Pettersson, who already started Megaptera.

When Megaptera formed in 1991 you were not actually a member but joined at a later date. How was it that you became a member of the group? Before that, I was in a band with Magnus Sundstrom called First Aid, but we decided to quit. I liked the music Mikael and Magnus were doing, but I was bet-

ter with some of the equipment they were using, so I started to experiment together with them. After a while, I was a full time member. The current status of Megaptera sees you being the sole remaining member. How did this situation arise and is this the most productive way for you to work? Mikael and Magnus just lost their interest in making music. I had really got the taste for it, so I decided to continue alone. Sometimes it's boring to be all alone, but it's positive too, because I decide everything on my own.



The earliest music I have heard from Megaptera are the tracks included on "in the Butchers Backyard" DCD (a compilation which included material from the groups on the Sound Source label). As these tracks (of an ambient EMB style) are a far cry from your current works I wanted to ask if you had any contribution to these works?

The tracks you mention were the first ones of the new Megaptera sound. They were the first tracks where we used just a sampler. No analogue sounds are used. During that

same period, we also made "Shadowland" and "Sodom" on Death Odors. At that time, Magnus Pettersson had quit the band. As many of the early Sound Source tapes have been re-released on CD are planned to be re-released, do you see any chance of this including the Megaptera tape 'Near Death'? Are you satisfied with the results looking back on it now? "Near Death" will be re-released as a double CD together with "Songs from the Massive Darkness" some time this year on Cat's Heaven. I still like our old productions. We had a lot of fun recording them. Thus far your releases have tended to be limited to the more obscure/ underground labels of the genre. How did you first gain contact with the

labels who have released your music? After releasing "Songs from the Massive Darkness" in 1992, we got a letter from Marco Corbelli of Slaughter Productions. He was very thrilled about this release, and he asked if we wanted to participate to one of his compilation tapes. This together with the first contact with Roger Karmanik is the most important in the history of Megaptera.

Your upcoming CD "Curse of the Scarecrow" is to be released soon on Release Entertainment, however at one point this was to be released through CMI. What exactly is the history behind the interest in the CD vs the label who finally obtained the rights? I didn't get any response from Relapse for a while, so I thought they weren't interested. I asked them instead and Roger was positive but he wanted to work with Relapse one more time. Then they were interested. I'm signed to Cat's Heaven, so they also are involved in this release.

Is it true that the "Curse..." is actually an album recorded back in 1994 when other members of Megaptera were still present? If this is so what led to the lengthy delay and how does this material compare to current works and previous releases?

It was written in 1995 as a follow-up to "Beyond the Shadow". It was supposed to be released by Anomalous Records, but too much trouble got me looking for another label. The track "Don't Desecrate the Dead" on The Absolute Supper is from this album and I think it's one of my best tracks ever. I don't think you can hear if it's new or old material.

The track which was solely responsible for evoking my interest in Megaptera was the apocalyptic death industrial track "Final Day" (included on sampler tape of upcoming releases on the Fever Pitch label - the track was to be included on the 'Beautiful Chaos' 10" EP). This 10" EP was meant to be out in 1997 but yet to be released and current

word has it will now be a mini CD. Furthermore an excerpt of the track "Final Day" was included on the Death Odours II compilation. What exactly is the storey behind this release and the tracks to be included on it? It was my idea to release it as a 10", but as time went on, Fever Pitch asked me if it was ok to release it as a cd-ep instead. It was fine with me. I had made two tracks for this release, "Final Day" and "Sleep". I also made the shorter version exclusively for "Death Odours II". Two more tracks are included on the cd-ep,

"Massmurder Part II" that carries the old sound, and "The Passage" - shorter and remixed version from "Disease". It has finally been released. When referring to the current Megaptera Magnus Sundstrom's (The Protagonist) name has appeared on more than the odd occasion. What exactly is his relationship to your workings as Megaptera? He helps me with computer programming as I am very bad with that kind of equipment. As he is my best friend, and we share the interest in experimental music, it's only natural that he gives a helping hand. With a number of current releases appearing over the last few years and the quality of works becoming more intense and dark Megaptera finally appear that they will break through and gain a much wider following that they deserve. What output can we expect from Megaptera in the near future?

At this moment, I just want to release the delayed stuff. I have no plans for a new full length album, meanwhile I work a little with Obscene Noise Korporation, a noisier side project.

Although you have stated that there is no political or religious motives being your music your works still remain intensely dark and foreboding. Where exactly do you draw your inspiration and what do we see that your music represents? I am inspired by TV, films, newspapers, reality. I try to mix those things with dark atmospheres and heavy machine rhythms. A reflection of our time. Much of the vocals included in your music are in fact sampled from various known and obscure

movies? Are there any plans to incorporate real vocals to your music and have you struck any copyright problems with the extensive use of dialogue?

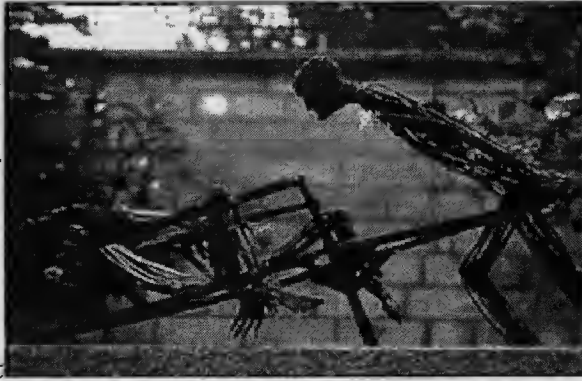
There will never be vocals in Megaptera, there for I have all these dialogues. They create the atmosphere even better than real vocals. I haven't had any problems yet with copyrights. What music are you personally listen as opposed to what may have

given you inspiration for the works you create? I listen to all kinds of industrial /noise music, old EBM as Front 242, Skinny Puppy, Front Line Assembly etc. I also like soft music like Enya and In The Nursery. All the music gives me inspiration to form my own style. There is a piece of every style in my music. I do know that you were a member of the group "Each Dawn I Die" which released a fantastic CD some time ago. As it looks set that the groups will release a second CD, are you still



an active member of the group? Magnus Sundstrom has taken my place for the second CD. Each Dawn I Die is a project focused around Marten Kellerman. The tracks on "Notes from a Holy War" we did together in 1993. A couple of years ago Magnus and Marten started to collaborate. I don't have a clue when the new CD will be out. Apart from Megaptera you also have a number of side projects (Negru Voda, Instant Cold Commando, Obscene Noise Terror). What is the reasoning behind have so many projects running concurrently? Can you please describe each project, what it represents and how you see that they differs from each other? What releases by these projects should we be aware of? Megaptera is the main project. Instant Cold Commando was my first sideproject, which released a tape on Slaughter Productions. It sounds like the first Megaptera tracks. Negru Voda is my machine rhythm project. A new CD is coming out on Old Europa Café, and a re-release of a split tape with third EYE. Obscene Noise Korporation is my latest project. It's pure noise experiments. An LP is released on Slaughter Productions. The reason for running all these projects is that I don't want to mix different styles under the Megaptera name. Do you have any other projects in the pipeline than the above mentioned ones? No new projects are planned. When working on previous project collaborations how difficult is it to achieve productive results? Is this part of the reason for your numerous solo side projects? No it's not difficult. As I said, the reason is that I

don't want mix styles. How do you go about producing your dark ambience/ death industrial of Megaptera and what types of equipment do you utilise? Are your works improvised or does extensive preparation and planning go into the production of the tracks? I improvise a lot, but often I have sounds that I want to sample ready. The equipment I use include sampler, analogue synths, drum machine and background tapes. As you are an individual that takes to the stage where possible, what is the attraction behind this?



What encompasses a Megaptera performance and are the tracks improvised or live versions of recorded ones? Do you use video visuals or other props and what reactions from the audience do you receive? I have only performed live twice, and I don't like it much. My music is difficult

to play live. We used video backdrop, all music is on DAT but I try to add lots of improvised noise and sounds. I haven't received any special reactions. A new Megaptera track is included on the CMI compilation "The Absolute Supper". Although you have never released anything on this label (except for a tape on the side tape label 'Sound Source') is it likely that we will see a full length on this label? I don't know if I will release anything on CMI. Nothing is planned. Well Peter, thanks very much for your interest and input into this magazine. Anything else to say to before we conclude? Thanks and no.....



Magnus Sundstrom (session)

Peter Nystrom

The Protagonist

Magnus Sundstrom is one of those artists that have been lurking in the wings of the ambient/ industrial scene for quite awhile, but whose recognition up until now has been limited. Since the formation of his new project "The Protagonist", Magnus has gained a noted reponse over a short period of time. This will surly explode into full blown respect once his debut CD is released this year on CMI (it should be out by the time this goes to print). Now onward with the interview...!

Your history with the ambient/industrial scene harks back to when groups such as Megaptera & Morthound were just beginning however it is only in the last year or so you have become a major contender? Can you please detail your history with music which led to your current solo formation?

1987 I started Fiskebatarna with Peter Nystrom of Megaptera. We wrote silly synth-pop songs with even sillier lyrics in Swedish. After a while our music making became more serious, we changed name to First Aid (and later on Commorium) and the music became darker. Around 1990 we got bored and Peter joined up with Megaptera. I didn't write any music until two years later when I started the band TWAT. What first sounded like something by early Laibach, ended up as a one time performance in the vein of Ministry and Revolting Cocks. Two years later I began making music again, now under the name third EYE. Mainly influenced by Klinik, SPK, Skinny Puppy and Test Dept. I made a few songs that appeared on a split tape with Peter's side project Negru Voda.

Although I am aware that your chosen pseudonym has only been changed recently, for me I find it holds quite an atmosphere. What was the reason behind choosing this name?

Some compilation appearances later I found out that there was a German band called third EYE, so when I was supposed to participate to the "Palace of Worms" CD I decided to change name. The reason for choosing The Protagonist is that it's a rather neutral name not typical for the genre, it's more suitable for my music's new direction, and it's a homage to one of my favorite bands, Dead Can Dance. Unfortunately, there

is a Norwegian synthpop-band called Protagonist, but since we don't have the same audience, I don't care. As you are now signed to Cold Meat Industry it appears that it has been a long time coming from your original contact with Roger Karmanik. Can you please detail this history with the label that led to you current signing? Roger Karmanik contacted me after listening to the split tape. He thought that my music was fantastic and wanted to hear more. I told him that my music had turned more orchestral and I sent him a tape with three tracks, "Imitation", "Zoroaster" and one more. After a while he told me that he wanted "Imitation" on his next compilation (...and Even Wolves Hid Their Teeth). After that nothing happened, and I didn't want to bother him, so I released the song on the compilation "Palace of Worms" instead. We lost contact, but when it was time to release "The Absolute Supper" he contacted me again.

CMI will have the honor of releasing your debut CD however are you signed for more releases than t h i s ?

No, I am not signed for further releases, but Roger / CMI has told me that I am "sentenced to eternal suffering" on CMI, or as long as I please. **How appropriate do you see CMI for the music you create? If you could be signed to any label which label do you feel would be most suitable for y o u ?**

I think that CMI probably are the most suitable label for me right now, and it's good to know that someone believe in my music. However, I want the music to sound as good as possible, and in my case I would need to involve people from a classical orchestra. This is rather expensive and the money CMI gave me only cover the studio costs. A dream is that someone would give me the money I need to realize the orchestral project, but until then I just try to make the music sound as good as possible with the available equipment. **Thus far the only material of yours that I have heard is your contribution to the "Ahisma" compilation and your two tracks included on the CMI "The Absolute Supper" compilation. For me the sound/ structure of the compositions greatly improved between the "Ahisma" track and the CMI**

compilation tracks. If you agree with this statement what in do you see as the reasons behind t h i s ?

All three tracks were written in 1994, but they have been recorded at different occasions. "Spirits of the Dead" on "Ahimsâ" was the first to be recorded, and at that time my equipment wasn't as good as it is now. I also think that my composition skills have improved during the years. So yes, I agree. I still like "Spirits of the Dead" though, so it's not impossible that some day I will record a new version. You have also been included on a number of compilations prior to the above mentioned. How many and which compilations have you been included o n ?

Well, as The Protagonist I have been included on the following compilations: "Palace of Worms" CD [Palace of Worms Records, Italy] 1996. "Riefenstahl" 2CD [VAWS, Germany] 1996. "In De Ban Van Tiwar" MC [GEENS, Belgium] 1996. I have also done two remixes: Statemachine "Happy Endings" CDM [October P., Sweden] 1996 and Les Jumeaux "Cobalt" CD [ITN Corporation, England] 1997. Are the above mentioned tracks (and/ or other

not be used again. I think that my contributions to "The Absolute Supper" are the most representative tracks regarding the forthcoming album, but the sound will be much more authentic. The release date for your debut was scheduled for early this year however this has obviously been delayed. What are the reasons for the delays & do you think that Roger Karmanik is committed to releasing your CD quickly when complete? (I ask this as there has been some extreme delays with some CMI items being recorded to being r e a s e d) .

The recordings should have been finished before the end of 1997, but the collaboration with Mark Ellis of Elijah's Mantle was delayed, so it was a good idea to take a break and repair some studio equipment. Unfortunately, the maintenance has also been delayed, but the equipment just got back. This means that everything will be recorded within two or three weeks. There are two songs left, which include Mark Ellis on spoken word, a new acquaintance called Psychonaut on cello and hopefully Peter Pettersson of Arcana on vocals. The CD will probably also contain an exclusive remix of "Zoroaster" by In The Nursery! Roger has



compilation contributions) to be included on your upcoming CD? Are these to be considered representative of what to expect of you full length debut ?

The track on "Palace of Worms" is an early version of "Imitation", which will appear in its final version on the album, with spoken word by Marten Kellerman of Statemachine / Each Dawn I Die. "Riefenstahl" contains my song "The Puritan" which also will be found on the album in a new and improved version. The Belgian tape includes a Skinny Puppy cover which will

told me that the album will be released as soon as possible, and I think that means August or September. We'll just have to wait and see. Do you have any ideas or concepts on how you want your music presented? Do you have any aspirations to play a role in the production of the art for the visual presentation? I try to let the music speak for itself, but a CD need a cover. I don't have any particular concept, but I think that Roger and I will come up with something suitable. As your music is quite militaristic in style/ struc-

ture this could lead to certain assumptions & interpretations on potential philosophies/ideals behind the music. What do you see as what your music represents and is there any specific intrinsic meaning?

I assume that you refer to right wing philosophies, but I don't see the connection that so many other people do. I make bombastic / militaristic music because I like it to be dramathurgical and not because of my beliefs. I guess that all my impressions are reflected in the music in one way or another, however, there are no deeper meaning behind them other than the fact that I want to create both dark and beautiful music at the same time. In the future I would like to write music for film, so I guess you could say that my music is the soundtrack to my inner self.

Your music being classically structured and executed would lead me to believe that you have had formalized music training. Is this the case?

I studied classical music theory one year. That has helped me a bit, but most of the songs on the forthcoming album were written before that. I think you could tell which songs are the more recent ones, because they seem to have become more melodic.

What styles of music do you personally listen to and who are some of your favorite artists?

I can't say that I listen to any specific styles, but some of my favorite artists right

now are: Dead Can Dance, In The Nursery, Shinuku Thief, Soma, Contrastate, Test Dept., Current 93 and Death In June. I also listen to a lot of film music, by composers as Wojciech Kilar, Elliot Goldenthal and Christopher Young. CMI plays host to many groups crossing a wide spectrum of religious and political beliefs. I do know that you show distaste for some of the groups who have a pseudo evil attitudes. Is this dislike of image/ attitude somehow related to that you may not be taken seriously as a musical artist if you are affiliated with the said groups? The only thing I have in common with most of the bands on CMI is that we are on the same label. Personally I like the wide spectrum of artists, but the label has become something more than just a label. People

seem to expect certain things from the artists; that they are extreme in one way or another. I'm not saying that I'm more serious than any other band on the label, but I focus on the music and nothing else. From my knowledge of the CMI roster it would appear that most groups have at least a knowledge of each other to a certain level. Which groups are you in regular contact with and do you know the members of the groups that you dislike their image/ attitudes?

The people I talk to once in a while are Benny / Hazard, Tomas & Chelsea / Ordo Equilibrio, Mikael / Inanna, Magnus / ConSono, Hakan / Sanctum and Lina/ Deutsch Nepal. I have talked to most of the others, including the bands that I find less interesting, but they are all very nice people. The different beliefs

and opinions don't affect our relationship.

Your personal involvement within the general Swedish Ambient / Industrial scene goes beyond your musical endeavors as you maintain a number of web pages for some other notable groups. Exactly whose web pages do you maintain and what is the ethos behind doing this?

I maintain websites for my self, Hazard, Megaptera and the American label Crowd Control Activities. I do it because they are my friends and I think they deserve more attention. I guess you can see that no money is involved, because they are very simple.

An upcoming label Crowd

Control Activities is to re-release a spilt tape of "third EYE" (pre Protagonist material) and "Negro Vodou" (a Megaptera side project) on CD. Will this include additional unreleased tracks from each group? Looking back on this material now are you satisfied with the results?

That tape actually was my first appearance in the industrial scene. I can't say that I'm satisfied with the result, but I think that the music definitely deserves a CD release. The re-release will contain two bonus tracks from each band, Peter's are both unreleased, but one of my tracks is from a compilation called "Life After Fallout / Ödland", released by Blaster Records. The other one is written especially for this CD. It will probably be out in August. One of your friends projects Megaptera is now



essentially a solo outfit however you have been recruited as a contributing member for live performances. I have also noted that you name popped up on the Megaptera-Deep Inside 12" EP. What is your actual contributions to the group and are you in fact a member (de facto or otherwise)? I started helping Megaptera when Mikale still was in the band, but after the recording of the soon to be released CD "The Curse of the Scarecrow", he decided to quit. My involvement came naturally, since Peter and I knew that we work quite well together. I'm not considered a real member, I just help Peter with sampling and programming of the computer. As you have graced the stage before, have you performed under your current moniker? If not are you planning to take to the stage in the near future? How difficult would it be to transform your music to the stage? I have not performed as The Protagonist, but once as third EYE and twice as part of Megaptera. Actually, two performances are planned for this summer, June 21st in Stockholm, Sweden and July 24th in Waregem, Belgium. I find it impossible to appear alone, therefore I will be assisted by one person on percussion and one on cello. I think there will be no problem to transform the music to the stage, but I can assure you that it will be even more powerful than on CD. Currently you are working on the second CD of Each Dawn I Die however you did not contribute to the first CD? How did you become involved in the groups and are there any of the original members left?

The people responsible for the first album was Marten / Statemachine and Peter / Megaptera. Marten and I

both live in Stockholm but Peter doesn't, so when he said that he wouldn't be able to participate, Marten asked me instead. What are your plans for the music for the second Each Dawn I Die CD and when can interested persons expect it to be released and on what label?

The album is entitled "Frozen Smiles on Faces Forgotten" and will be more orchestral than its predecessor, and much better produced. However, both Marten and I have lots of other things to do, so we don't know when we can finish it. The label will as far as I know be Dark Vinyl.


Are there any other side projects we should be made aware of?

After my debut album with The Protagonist, I will start working on a side project in the vein of third EYE; more noise, less music and more improvisation. The project is untitled at the moment. I gather that you would not be able to undertake music as a full time endeavour. Would this be your ultimate plan or would you prefer to make it simply an interest/hobby? What occupation do you have to support your musical interests? Right now I am studying economics. When I'm finished I will try to begin making music full time. I want to compose for TV, film, theatre, art exhibitions and also remix other artists. I hope this will work out, because music is what I have to do. Hopefully my forthcoming debut album will help me find customers. Once again I would like to thank you for completing this interview. Is there anything you would like to bring up before the interview concludes. No, sorry...



What can one say about Sanctum? They are surely one of the most innovative bands within any genre of music at this point in time as they cover so many styles and themes within their music. For me, I do believe that there is a certain commercial potential for this group with their perfect mix of theatric music combined with enough industrial sensibilities and a heavy dose of moving melodies. (yes, if your wondering I used the above blurb in the Sanctum review also - pretty slack hey...! - ed). To say I was pleased when I snared this interview in an understatement, so sit back and enjoy this in-depth and informative interview as much as I did writing & receiving it..

the Cold Meat Industry Web page), but did not manage to hear any of your music until your debut CD "Lupus in Fabula" was released in 1996. There was an original version of the track "Dragonfly" on the US version of "& even wolves hid their teeth" sampler CD (which I am still yet to hear) but what, if any releases did you have before this? Lupus in Fabula is Sanctums first release and the music on L.I.F was created over quite a long period. I have made music for some theatre projects that I rewrote for Sanctum when the idea to start the group arose. The main reason to start up Sanctum was that Hakan and I wanted to create music without limitations. We had a group before called Nov Com (the november commandment) but we felt that we had too many limits in that band and that we had done all of what we could (I think I have lost the line:-) So certainly, L.I.F is our first release. You mentioned a previous band Nov Com that you and Hakan were involved in. What style of music did this group compass and did you have any releases under this moniker?



...some of the people would have called it. We worked together in late 80's. There was an interview in Nov com, Andreas Matsson mentioned concerning my band Gustafsson. He is now studding and released some recordings back in 93. But I don't know if you the Nov Com will release the complete work. Framing Fish this summer. How did you manage to come in contact with Roger Karmanik and were you previously aware of CMI when Sanctum formed? How closely are you involved with the Swedish industrial scene as a whole?

Samuel Durling that is one of the members in Mental Destruction (a band on CMI) is an old friend of ours. He thought that I should start a group with the kind of music that I have done for theatre and other audio-visual projects. And like I said before Hakan and I wanted to broaden our minds and not have any limits in our creation of music. Hakan and I felt that Lena (a friend of Hakan) should fit into our concept so we asked her and she was really exited of the idea thus Sanctum was formed. Our first gig was together with Roger Karmanik's "Brighter Death Now" and we had have some contact with him before. After he had heard us he was willing to have Sanctum on his label. Concerning how we are involved in the industrial scene here in Sweden, I think that all the good industrial music lies on CMI, like Raison D'etre, In Slaughter Natives and Mental

Destruction. Sanctum has been touring with some of them and I think the atmosphere is quite good among the bands. Of course there is a lot of different thoughts and beliefs but as long you have respect for one other and can see the reason for each persons ways, when we are together it is no
p r o b l e m .

I will comment that overall there are "CMI" elements within your music, but at the same time I feel that it has the potential to be well received by a larger audience than simply individuals from the industrial/ ambient scene. What are your thoughts on this and was it by any means a deliberate attempt to produce such a diverse release?

Yes I think you are right that we are a little bit more "easy listening" then the other bands on CMI, and I think that we could have a different audience if we had the opportunity to let them know about us but it is hard to reach them. But I must say that I'm very satisfied with the fact that we have reached that many people with our first album. The reason for the diverse release that is "Lupus In Fabula" is like I said before that we will do music we find interesting and hopefully people haven't heard before. And another reason is that the material on L.I.F was produced over a long period. I think that the next

album is going to be more of a unit. After hearing your contribution to "the absolute supper" compilation (with the track also being included on your recently released 10" picture disc) to me it sounds even more commercially oriented with its straight forward structure and short length. Was this a conscious effort on you behalf and is this a preview of the future direction of Sanctum? Furthermore is there any cryptic meaning behind the song having a title on the compilation but only being referred to a symbol on the
10" EP?

No we have no intention to do more commercial music, and the tune on "Absolute Supper" can not be taken as a preview of future Sanctum. It is a tune that we like and we have played it for quite awhile. We actually recorded the music just after the release of LIF for our European tour 96. It was the opening act and we got so great response on it but we felt that it would not fit in our next album (maybe we will make a rearranged version on the album). The idea to have it on the Absolute Supper comp. arose so we included it as we are very satisfied with the tune. Concerning the title, something went wrong in the communication between

CMI and us. The title on the comp. was our working-title however they also spelled it wrong, so on the second edition it is nameless. The tune is nameless because the lyrics tell about a man that seeks for something that he doesn't know what it is. I'm sorry but it was not anything cryptic, maybe I should not tell you the reason and pretend it was ;)

To go back to our music, I talked to a guy a couple of days ago and he also told me that the tunes on the 10" was more commercial. We discussed it because I don't agree and we come to the conclusion that it is commercial compared to the other bands on CMI. We have the intention to work with the lyrics as much as possible and that is something that I think separates us from other CMI-bands and that could be experienced as commercial. I don't know. Our new tunes is longer and more harsh but with the orchestral delicateness still there, it is maybe more of it compared to LIF but the samples is also more harsh to make the contrast bigger.

Which scenes or countries have shown the greatest

interest in Sanctum and how many units of your debut have you managed to sell? We have had quite good response from many different kinds of people and of course the industrial scene is the one we see the



most response from because of magazine with reviews and articles and for the reason that we are into that. It is also due to the fact that our label is CMI that brings us into the industrial scene. If we had another label behind us with a broader audience I think we could have reached more people. For example we recently played as an opening act for a celloist that had a string and brass section backing him up. I can tell you that the audience was quite varied, we had very good response from all different kinds of people from the age of 15 to the age of 60. I have noticed this phenomena several times when we have played live. I think we have sold around four thousand copies of L.I.F until now. The artwork of the CD is quite fantastic with the group being credited for its production. As the Karmanik family plays a vital role in the artwork of CMI groups did they have any participation in the production of your sleeve? Furthermore have any of the members had formalised artistic tuition? The sleeve was completed fully on our own responsible, with no interpretation from CMI. Hakan with his job works with these kind of things and has done some other sleeves for groups. I'm very interested in the visuals and try to get

some time to paint and do some "computer art" so it felt natural for us to do our sleeve by ourselves. Are you also responsible for the stunning images on the 10" picture disc? Is there any actual meaning behind these pictures other than being aesthetically pleasing?

We have made the artwork on the 10" as we try to bring something with our music (and the same goes with the artwork). But I can't say it has an actual meaning, it is just like our music. It is up to the listener/viewer to put a meaning to it.

As the 10" has just been released how do you feel about its presentation and the music contained within? Are you big fans of vinyl releases and was this a specific request to CMI from the group? I'm very satisfied with the 10" both the visuals and the music. The strongest tune on the 10" is called 'Madelene'. If you listen to the lyrics and try to transform it together with the

music into a unit it is quite scary. It is so great when the lyrics fit in the music totally. I created the music like a year ago or so and Hakan wrote the lyrics after I was finished with the music. At first I didn't feel that strong about the tune but it has grown to be something special for me. I hope that the listeners to the

10" will feel something like I do because it really deserves that. I don't want to be pompous or something but if I had not liked what I'm doing I had not going on doing it. Concerning the vinyl-thing, we felt that we wanted to release something to our listeners, after all it is two years since LIF came out. We wanted to do something more than just a cd-ep so we brought the idea up with CMI and as you know they are into odd releases so they liked the idea. But we have no special love for vinyl it just seemed to fit in our concept of what we wanted to bring. I'm glad that it has sold so good as there are just a few copies left. When we got the vinyl in our hand I was afraid that it would be difficult to sell, but it didn't. So after all I'm very satisfied and hope the work with the next album will go the same way. Quite a number of industrial groups take a satanic approach to both concept and music while Sanctum seem to (from my interpretation of the lyrics) bypass the 'evil' trappings and focus more on the duality of the human mind/ human nature. Is this a correct

assumption/ interpretation on my behalf?

We are interested in existential issues. That's why the lyrics have a spiritual touches and deal with contrasts like light and darkness, good and evil for example. We can't stand for the satanic or other extreme thoughts that sometimes appear in this scene. I don't agree for any reason in these kind of beliefs or thoughts but as I said before that's not a problem for us as we respect the other bands on CMI if they can respect us. The bands want to do something and they are doing it just like us.

What are your personal views on traditional organised religion and do you subscribe to any specific ideas of individuals or trains of thought?

I can't agree to the organised way of practising the Christian belief but I have a belief in God, good and evil. I think that it is important to care for one other and make the life as good as possible.

The above question and answer has led to the gossip

and rumors that Sanctum is a Christian band. Do you want to confirm or refute this claim?

We all have different thoughts and beliefs concerning this.

As said before we have a belief in God and so does Hakan but we also have questioning in our life. I can't say that Sanctum is a Christian band if you mean that we have a mission for God



with the band. We try to bring feelings and experiences from life, put a light on the human kind (that sounded pompous). We just create music that we can express ourselves in, in one way or another. I don't think it has any importance what label you put on a band the main thing is what the listener gets out of the music and the lyrics. The listeners must be alert and active when they listen to music and put their own experience into it and transform it to something that is unique for him. When you just put a label on the band as Christian and then it is all right to listen to it is so wrong. I have noticed that people do so, I have had the question many times, and I've got e-mails from people that wonder if we are Christian. Is that important, don't they have their own will to analyse the lyrics and music and like I said before, make it to something that they can stand for? The important thing is the way we practise life that we try to do our best in our own opinion. Sanctum have managed to grace the stage on quite a number of occasions and from reports received you

are an act which has to be seen live. How important do you see playing live is to the group and do you use samplers or programmers when playing live? I think it is very important to play live because it is a chance to meet people that like our music and helps to bring our music further with visual elements that we try to use as much as possible. It is hard to bring that feeling on a small CD disc. Live we work with video projections and sometimes we have dancers on stage and we try finding new ways to bring the visual experience closer to the music. We play live as much as possible. I play some hand drums and odd instruments that I have collected from different sides of the world and some of them have we made by ourselves. I also play on samplers. Hakan plays some keyboards and sings, Lena sings and Marika plays the cello and sing some background. In a way I don't like to play live because I can never reach the feeling that I can get in our studio when I create the music. That is quite frustrating for me as I've got a picture of how the music should and when you hear the live sound you often gets disappointed. But I can't deny that the feeling when you get good response from the audience is wonderful, that make my worries worth it. And the fact that the other members just love to perform live also makes me going on.

How do you present yourself in the live arena and do you employ any visual/ video imagery to enhance the symbolism of the performance? In our video projections we reflect our music and we want it to bring the experience further in a way that we can't do with only the music as medium.

In future do you see yourselves having the opportunity and/ or aspirations to produce a video clip? If so what would you see as a potential song to use and how would you present/ represent it? We have had the thought for awhile but we have not had any particular tune in mind. As you had noticed we are very much into the visuals and try to make the visuals united with our music, so making a video is something we really should enjoy doing. We have plans to work together with a woman; her name is Ulrika Carlson. She is studying to become, what do you call it...? a photographer for movies. She has really good ideas and we have worked together with her before when she took care of the lights on our live performances. If I should pick a tune now to make a video of I thing I should take 'Madelene' that I mention about before, or another tune that will appear on the new album. After all you always feel most for the tunes that has been made recently. How I would represent it is hard to tell, I have many ideas but as for everything else concerning our music we had tried to mirror our music as good as possible and tried to bring our expression further with the elements the video gives.

As your music ranges from sweet/ sorrowful orchestral ambience to harsh industrial I gather the musical field you would draw inspiration from would be quite extensive. What styles of music do you listen to and which bands/ groups have gained your attention recently?

Yes, we have a very broad music field within the group. I listen to a great variety of music and I thing that is important to be open-minded, one reason is that if you don't, you miss so much great music and I think when you create something artistic it is good to be open-minded. So as said before I listen to many different styles. I have grown up in a home where classic music had a central place and I have been listening to classic music since then. I listen to everything from hard heavy metal to ambient dance. If I should mention some of the music I listening to now, you have Hans Eklund a modern classic composer, Neurosis, Neubauten, Radiohead, Portishead, Blackhouse, and a band called Delta Files that I had the opportunity to see on a festival in France where I joined Mental Destruction. I must say that I been listening very much to Mental Destruction's last CD "Straw" lately. For me it is very important that the band have a very good hand with the sounds they create and that the rhythm is intelligent and Mental Destruction sure has that element. With such diversity, maturity and complexity displayed on your releases I gather that the members would have been involved in other projects in the past. How did you first become involved with industrial/ ambient music and how did you progress to your current workings within Sanctum? Furthermore, do any of the members of Sanctum have formal musical or compositional training?

Yes everyone in the band has had one or more projects going on. But I don't know how I became involved in the industrial scene. I/we have no intention to be an industrial band, you can say that we became one when we agreed working with CMI. It was at this time I got involved in the industrial scene. I got in contact with the ambient scene earlier and I have been a "musician" (am I a musician!? ;-)) for almost 12 years now. I have always been attracted to the elements that is contained within the ambient music. When I started it was not called ambient, I think. The reason way Sanctum has become reality is because of the above mentined band nov com. It was in that band Hakan and I started to work together. But we started to feel that it was to many limits in that band, and we had already started to work on a project called "Pale Session" where we used music and visuals. Pale session had a performance caled "Totale age" that you can say is the mother of Sanctum. At this time I also worked together with some theatres, doing music and soundscapes for plays. I brought some of my work from



these plays into Sanctum. Concerning our musical or compositional training, Lena has taken some vocal courses and Marika is studying music now (especially the cello). Hakan has no training behind him. "Unfortunately" I don't have any training in composition either, besides that I have done this for a couple of years now. I feel at this point that it could be of use, but I also think that you should have a solid ground to stand on. To know what you want achieve with your music, without that musical training could be a trap. I often see musical trained people waste their creativity because they are limited within their training. Like I mentioned before Hakan and I had a group together with two other guys and we have also done some other more project based happenings. I have, like I said before done some music for theatre and I have played drums in a couple of bands. Hakan plays keyboard in a hardcore band called Counterblast. Lena has never been into this kind of music at all, but has sung in some "cover bands" I don't know what you call them, but it is a band that plays tunes of other artists. Marika has played guitar in a band in the goth scene and drums in a Latin American band. Hakan and I have this project together with our live-soundengineer called "The year of the Parrot". I'm working on my own in a 45 min composition at this very moment. And then I have Cromedragon together with Andreas M a t t s s o n .

I hear that you are currently involved in the production of a sound score for an exhibition. Can you elaborate on the actual music and the nature of the contribution to the exhibition? Further, will this be made available to those who what to experience it who are not able to attend the original installation? The tune or the soundscape was created for and photographed, it was the artist Mattias Wreland that had taken the pictures and they were taken in a factory where the exhibition took place. This was back in 93 I think. This factory was shut down and a culture project was started in some parts of it and the exhibition was a way to mirror a past time in the factory's history. It was great to work on mirroring this pictures with sounds, I really admire his work. The idea to do something with the soundscape arose about a year ago, Sam (Mental Destruction) and I discussed the exhibition and the works I had done for it. Sam thought that I should do something with it. When I listened to it (which I had not done for a while) I thought that I had to rearrange it a bit and the rearrangements have grown to something completely new. There is not much left of the original sound. I'm confused if this is bad or good, I really enjoy to work on the tune and I think it can turn into something great. From the beginning I had the intention to include some of the artwork on a possible cd-cover but now I don't know if the music differs so much compared to the original. The music can maybe be described like this, slow-harsh-neoclassic-industrial music. I really hope that I together with Ma-

collaboration to join the music and the visual, the time will tell.

A new project of yours has also surfaced under the know how "TYOTP" work when they create their music you get a hint on the meaning behind it, I think hmm.... I don't know. It is hard for me to explain the music of TYOTP if I make it easy for me I would say Strange-industrial. I really hope that it will be available for those who are interested in a near future. Are any of Sanctum's members able to involve themselves in music as a full time occupation or do you have the standard type jobs/ careers so as to support your musical endeavours?

No unfortunately not, we all work or are studying. What are Sanctum's current plans for the future and are any new releases currently in works? Will you remain signed to CMI or have any other labels shown interest?

We work hard on the new full-length album. I hope CMI is still interested.

Do you see your future music further exploring the sounds and themes of your debut or will you branch out and explore other musical ideas which were not previously touched upon?

I hope that we can bring our sound further and also explore some new grounds, now we have found a sound that we like but we still have the intention to do just what we like to do so it is hard to say where we are going to land.

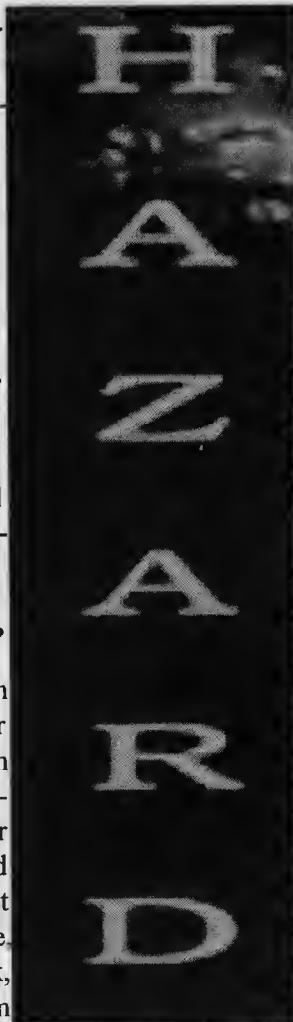
As I have been made aware that the new CD has been delayed due to the members being located in different places for study purposes when can the finished product of your second full length be expected?

I really don't know, but I hope in a near future. I will now finish this interview here but is there anything you would like to be said before we conclude?

I hope that the one who read this will listen to Lupus In Fabula and maybe they can join us in our journey. And I will thank you and your magazine for showing interest in Sanctum.

Envy.
Sed Diabolus in invicem
Istud irritat
Quia nullum opus Dei
Interdum dimisit.
Only the Devil laughed
honour to scorn
In his envy he left
no work of God
untouched.

Benny Neilson, (better known at this point in time for his previous works as Mortho(u)nd who released three CD's on CMI) has returned with his new musical formation otherwise known as "Hazard". With one CD 'Lech' already under his belt (out on Malignant Records), Benny is pushing the definitions of minimalistic ambience into more 'active' realms than his current contemporaries. With 'Lech' having received praise in it's respective genre the upcoming Hazard CD's will surely give Benny the same acclaim as what Morthound received.



To begin this interview I guess I will have to ask some inevitable historical questions relating your previous musical project Mortho(u)nd. How did you first become involved in music and the industrial / ambient style?

I have always been messing around with sounds since I was little brat! I remember hearing a Klaus Schutze live concert on the radio. I guess that was my first introduction into ambient type of music. Later on me and some friends discovered bands like Neubauten, DAF, Cabaret Voltaire, NON, Laibach, Zoviet France, Nurse with wound, SPK, Big Black, Sonic Youth... Ordered records from Staalplaat and Cold Meat. The compilations QED and A Bead from an small mouth was the two most important records for inspiration.

Why did you choose to end Mortho(u)nd? Even on the Karmanik Collection CD (before the release of your 2nd & 3rd CD's) the bio tended to hint that you where going to end the project (quote: "I present to you the last feature made by Morthond"). Was this in fact the intention or was it related to the changing of spelling of Morthond to Morthound?

I was tired of the project and wanted to start up a new one. Exactly what does the name Morthond/ Morthound mean and what was the reason for the change in spelling? To separate the first things from the later ones. After the release of the 3rd & last Morthound disc there was a slight break before you resurfaced under the Hazard moniker. After the conclusion of your first major music project did you always intend to continue with making music?

Yes, I'm completely devoted to this. During the break I did some other things, like wasting my time in a couple of bands. Gained some hearing loss....

Can you describe the intents and purposes behind

Hazard and how do you see it differing from Morthound?

It's more abstract and intense, hypnotic, feverish, almost close to explode or.... implode. Try to stretch time and space, the usually stuff!

Your debut Hazard CD was released by the upcoming label Malignant Records. As your previous works were released predominantly on CMI did you specifically choose to find a new label for you new project? Was CMI at all interested in releasing the debut Hazard disc?

Yes and no. It happened that way, I guess it's the way it worked out. I even continued doing some thinking while recording. Some of the tracks were meant to be as Morthound but since CMI didn't like the stuff, I was fed up and decided to leave the label. Then I sent some stuff around and also to Malignant/Jason who was very positive about it. The CMI compilation "The Absolute Supper" featured a new Hazard track (titled: Who blew out the northern lights?). Was this included as a tribute to the label and your past works on it? Are there any plans in future to return to the label?

I didn't know that I was to be included on that CD, I sent some stuff that's all. I don't make plans for which label I gonna do recordings for. Anyway, I think that I'm to surreal and minimalistic for CMI. What is the meaning behind the above mentioned song title and it at all related to some sort of northern European "pride"?

No, there is no special European pride. We are as much assholes as anyone! Such things just makes me wanna throw up. The Northern lights are beautiful to watch at though.

The track titles on the debut Hazard CD "Lech" do not seem to follow a specific concept. Do the titles represent what each track is about? Only in my head, I would prefer to not use them but at the same time I think that it can add some extra sense to it.

Most of the time you choose to remain anonymous leaving your music at the forefront. Why do you choose to do this and do you portray any actual meanings, concepts or ideas with your music?

I got some concept ideas for a couple of records, Like more field recordings and such stuff. I'm a big fan of old elevators and fan-systems and generators at the moment. Track four on the CD "Wrapped in Plastic" features a voice stating words that via some technique gradually morph into another word. How did you achieve this unusual effect? I change the start point of the loop sample gradually, by moving the modulation wheel slowly forward.

experimentation? Yes. Latest news would have it that you have been commissioned to produce soundtrack material for an Australian film maker. Who exactly is the film producer and what types of films will you be working on? Did this interest in your music evolve from that individual hearing your compositions? Will you have free rein over the music you produce or there guidelines you must work within to create



How has the reaction been to your new incarnation, is it predominantly the same audience as before. How many units have you managed to sell of the "Lech" CD?

Around a thousand copies. I don't know if I have reached a new audience or not.

Could you say that there is there a typical type of "fan" of your music?

No, Please let me know!

As your "music" would not consider traditional in the true definition of the word how do you go about producing it and what types of equipment do you use?

I use anything that can produce or reproduce sound: Analogue synths, Samplers, Bass guitars, Guitars, Pedal boxes, Wood, Water, Generators, Metal, Elevators, Radios, Paper, Glass, My own voice, Other peoples voices...and so on. I start with an idea, then collect the specific sounds I think will fit in. Records it onto an Sampler, Macintosh and/or the A-DAT. Mess around with it for a while until the sounds have found their place in the mix, then mix and record it. A very old school way of working. Do the tracks evolve out of specific ideas/compositions or do they evolve from improvisation and

music for a certain scene/ passage? Will the music be recorded under one of your group names or will you choose just to use your real name?

They had heard the Karmanik collection CD and liked the Morthond track so much that they wanted to use it in their movie called "Bloodrush" I don't know any more about it because they seem not to be able to manage to send me any copy of it. Tricky people. I don't wanna lose energy for nothing. So if anyone has got a copy of it please send it to me.

Would this be your ultimate goal to pursue music on a full time level?

It would be ok to work on it full time for awhile. I'm working now on some music with M Stavöstrand from Inanna/ Archon Satani on some TV-scores. Which is fun because we can do what we want (Almost). You are currently collaborating with Lina of Deutch Nepal on a side project. What is this project and what style/ form will it encompass? It's Psycho Kraut amongst other things..

Can we expect any sort of release from this collaboration?

We have recorded a few hours of material that is going to be a couple of records. The first is an old collaboration between Morthound/ Deutsch Nepal. It's

about a Boy called Richie Beacon who kills his parents and then fly out of the window. Out soon on Lina's own label: Entartete Musikk. About the second one I don't know. It has got some Nico covers on it and some really nice atmospheres. A release year or label is not decided yet.

There was rumor that a new Morthound CD has been recorded. Is there any truth to this and if so do you have any plans to have your two projects running side by side? I started on it but got bored. However I have started some other projects / collaborations. One with Rich and Christie from Orphx. We did some recording when they played in Stockholm. It turned out really good I think. Then there's some other unfinished stuff, I record a lot of other groups in the studio where I live & "work". Hazard has performed live on a number of occasions. What is involved in playing live? Do you play recorded tracks or new improvisations? Do you utilize any sort of stage prop installation as part of the performance? Mainly new improvisations even though I have certain passages I have to get through. No installations so far but as everything else I'm working on it. It's always tricky to do something interesting live with this sort of thing. The gear is Guitar, Microphones, Metal, Loops and loads of effects. It tends to be very droney. It would appear that 1998 will be quite a prolific year for you as there are three CD's planned to be released under the Hazard moniker. Are these albums yet recorded and who will have the privilege of releasing them? First one on Malignant "Battery Slave"-Louder than the rest, Collection of live sessions from the past few



years. Second one: "The law of a world without a future" on Cold Spring Records. It's more subdrone and ambient(That word again) Third one: "North in various capacities" on Sentrax Corporation, It is the best so far I think: Static, Hypnotic and...

As each Morthound album differed extensively while retaining certain styles/themes will this be the same case for Hazard? How do you see the upcoming albums differing from the Lech CD and how will Hazard evolve and change in the future? Hazard can evolve in whatever direction seems interesting, We'll see. What are your views on the current ambient/ industrial scene & the growing interest in it from other sub-cultures of music? How do you see it evolving and expanding in the future & how far can experimental scene go? The only way to survive is to mix genres and be open for new things or at least be aware of them. I do listen to a lot of music but seldom do I get surprised (until this year) when I got introduced in the Mego scene which I really really like. For the first time in years I've got that feeling of not knowing exactly what it is that you hear. It is a beautiful feeling. What are your personal tastes in music? Fennez, Bowery Electric, Neu, Faust, Ashratemple, Sonic Youth, MX 80 Sound, Main, Tomas Köner, Project Dark, Jim O'Rourke, Nurse with Wound / Stereolab, Zoviet*France: Well thank you Benny for being a part of Spectrum's first installment. I will now pass the floor over to you to conclude the interview. Thank you and good luck with the mag. C h e e r s , B e n n y .

Mz.412 are one of those projects that have been medling in a few styles/ sub cultures of music for a number of releases, with quite interesting results. Below is the interview with Kremator the main vocalist for the group that was first conducted late in '97 and further updated in May

1 9 9 8

Mz.412 have been in existence for nearly 10 years but it has only been over the past 4 to 5 years you have again emerged as a major force in the industrial scene. What was the reasons for the groups dormant phase during the early 90's? We had some difficulties with the line-up, and we lacked interest. people left the band for other projects and everything was difficult to maintain, so Maschinenzimmer 412 was not functional for almost 5 years... Satanic symbolism plays quite a role in the bands imagery along with some norse elements. How compatible are these two concepts of heathenism and satanism? (as essentially one is an honor based life code while the other focuses on the destruction of all life/ mankind). Our beliefs are in the development of mankind as a natural beast. We are basically just animals... And only the strong survive, survival of the fittest! We do not prefer the destruction of all life, just the unworthy, weak and dirty lowlifes. Satanism is more symbolic, representing the strong individual. So it would be correct to assume that you are not childish enough to believe that there is in fact a real conscious entity named Lucifer? If this assumption is correct why not reject the term "Satan" (which is inexplicably linked to the bible and the Christian ethos) and simply focus on the extension of mankind through an individual belief code? Well, I agree with you... but the term "Satan" is more a symbol of individuality than an entity with a pitchfork. With your use the term "Satanism" and your somewhat extreme image, is it not that you are simply adhering to what others think a "Satanist" should be? Wouldn't it be more extreme in itself to portray

"normal" everyday look/ image which would make people more susceptible to listening and understanding your viewpoints? We don't look that normal/ everyday anyway... and to be frank with you, I don't care that much what people think. What is your opinion of groups such as "Ordo Equilibrio" that are clearly "anti Christian" however promote themes of love & peace to your close brethren? To begin with i can tell you that i am a very dear friend of Ordo E. and we get along fine... they might even join us in the studio when we record the final pieces of the new album. "love peace and understanding" is great as long as you share it with your own kind. Corpse paint also plays a heavy role in your imagery but as many black metal bands are currently choosing to drop its use, will mz.412 follow suit? Furthermore how important is the black metal image for the group? (considering that many other industrial artists choose to remain anonymous). The image is not the most important, the music will always be the thing that counts. We will not drop the war paint as we prefer to be anonymous. The latest offering ('burning the temple of god') delves into some traditional elements of black metal fused with harsh industrial noise. I also have been led to believe that the upcoming release will feature a heavier focus on the black metal elements. What was the initial reason for choosing to embark on this style? Basically because we do the music we like... The new album, Nordik Battle Signs, will have some BM elements, but I don't think its going to be the main focus. We are a hybrid band, playing the best of both worlds..... I have noted there has been certain backlash against black metal in the past year or so. Do you think this may reflect badly on mz.412 being taken seriously in the long term as an in-



dustrial project, since you have taken aboard some black metal elements? No, I think we will do fine whatever the "public-BM-opinion" is, we're still basically an "industrial" band (whatever that means). It has been stated that a human bone drum was used during the recordings of "burning the temple of god". As it is not easily definable on which tracks this was used, was its use more related to the ritual aspect of the music's creation than the actual sounds it created? The bones used are from New Guinea and are made from the big hip bones (I think). Shaman Behemoth bought them on a vacation trip several years ago.

They are used on "submit and obey" in the ritual we performed during the recording of this track. The ritual aspect of your formation has cropped up a number of times when referring to the production of your music. What types of rituals do you form and have you had extensive experience with magic? We do not like to discuss this subject as it is no ones business except our own.

Further to the above question, it is noted that when spelling words that you constantly replace the letter "c" with "k"? Is there any major significance in this and is it in any way related to Aleister Crowley's spelling of the word "magic" with a "k"?

No, its just a nordik tradition. With the vinyl version of "burning..." (due to length constraints) the track "vampiir of the north" was omitted. As this was one of the track that displayed black metal elements, why was this track dropped instead of one of the more traditional industrial compositions? That was Cold Meat's choice, not ours... I would have preferred a double 12" gatefold vinyl release instead.

As you are the pioneers of a new genre/hybrid style of music do you believe other groups will follow the lead you have shown and if so what is your opinion of this? There are already bands copying our style... As long as they do it good and not just are cheap assholes with nothing new or original to offer, its ok by us. Just remember who started it..... There has been mention of a collaboration



between puissance and mz.412 to create a 20 minute track (from what i can imagine the results would be truly apocalyptic!). Is this still to take place and do the two groups have set ideas on what they want the track to sound like or will it be improvised in the studio? Unfortunately we never recorded something together, but we are "partners-in-apocalypse" and I think that a future collaboration is not impossible. Although in the cover of "burning..." It states that your role in mz.412 is vocals, are you limited only to this input? Also does any one single member have a pivotal role to play in the music's production?

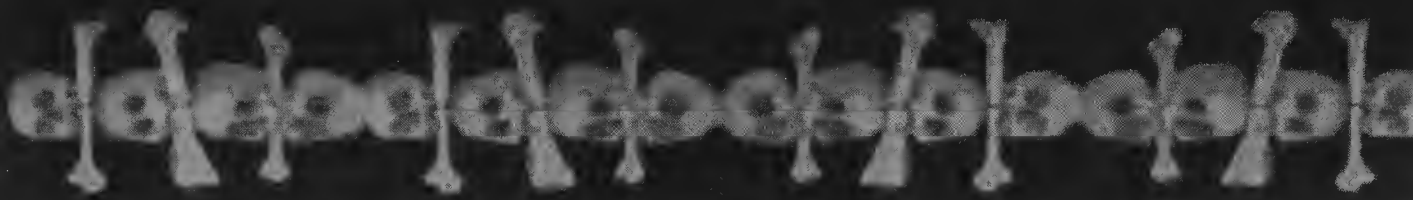
Basically we all do the music/rituals, but our main tasks in the group are the one printed on the album.

Further to the above question I believe that you obviously have a good understanding on how to create dark industrial music as you have your own side project/collaboration called "Kremator Nordvargr / Hirdman Drakh". How will this project differ from the music of mz.412 and when is a release expected?

The first "Nordvargr/Drakh" (northern dark supremacy) release will be released in the end of 1998, hopefully on some strange new CMI sublabel. It will be a limited vinyl only release. The music is more industrial/ambient than mz. 412. I also have my very own projekt "volkssturm", which is more harsh noise Sado industrial. (if someone is interested in releasing it, please contact me! Serious (labels, please)).

As the collaboration is with the entity called 'Hirdman Drakh', who exactly is this individual and does he play a role in any other musical project that the underground would be aware of?

He is drakhon of mz.412.... I believe that the last time mz.412 undertook a live performance was in 1990. As it has been mentioned that ritual improvisations plays a part in your music's production, did this live performances reproduce recorded tracks or consist of new improvised compositions? Did you use any stage props or video footage/visual material and what?





was the reaction of the crowd when you performed?

That live performance sucked.... There was no "special effects" or props involved at all. The music was partially improvised & partly on DAT. Was this the live performance that was released as the first half of the "Macht Durch Stimme" CD by Dark Vinyl? Looking back at that live material are you still pleased with the results? Yes it was. No, I don't like that recording.

Seeing that you have played live before do you have future aspirations to take to the stage again. If so, what type of a performance do you have planned?

We have no plans for live gigs, so we haven't thought much about it... but I guess it would be a bloody performance. Previously it has been mentioned that the "Malfeitor" album from 1989 will be re-released. Is this still to occur and will it be re-worked for it's new pressing? Does any of

the material on the "Macht Durch Stimme" CD contain any of the tracks from the "Malfeitor" LP? Roger Karmanik told me last week that he is planning to re-release Malfeitor spring 1998... It will contain the original album + some old Unreleased tracks + maybe some unreleased new songs, time will tell. Yes, some of the live tracks on Macht... originates from Malfeitor, but the live versions differ from the LP.. The latest track you have released is the "n.b.s. act 1-begravning" track contributed to the CMI compilation "the Absolute Supper". This track appears to hark back more to the more slower & harsher industrial sounds of the "in nomine..." CD from 1995. Is this track representative of the

material you are preparing for your new release?

Yes and no, some of the new songs are slow, some are very noisy and some are very militant(!). In the above mentioned track a repeated vocal/voice sample is used. For those of us who do not speak Swedish (I gather that is what language it is) can you translate what it is saying? Actually its in German. No, I will not translate it... I will not spoil the fun!!!

I believe that the upcoming mz.412 recording "Nordic Battle Signs" is currently in production. What can listeners expect from this new release in comparison to previous offerings? Also as it appears that the release will be a double CD (now for the all important question!), Will it be pressed onto vinyl? Nordik Battle Signs will be more majestic and harsh than "burning...". Also, as mentioned above it will be more militant. I hope their will be a vinyl release also, I just love vinyl.

This is one question I just had to ask!! On your web page there is picture of the mz.412 logo/symbol tattooed on your calf. Now that a new version of your symbol has recently been released what will you do with your tattoo? There is no new symbol for mz.412, only for the album, so there is no problem with that. (besides, I wouldn't mind an other tattoo...) Ok Kremator, than you very much for completing the interview, is there anything that you would like to say to finish up? Thanks for your support, keep the faith in darkness and you shall never Fail! Hail victory!



Well, here we are at the obligatory review section where I get to air my personal tastes and general grievances in music for all to read and assess! Well apart from that, I hope that you will be able to read about a release that you might otherwise have never been aware of and be able to find something in it similar to what I have (I guess that is the ultimate aim of a review). Please note that no numbered/ star rating systems have been used. Each album can exist independently of another and not need to be converting to a common scale for comparison purposes...only the words and descriptions are of importance.

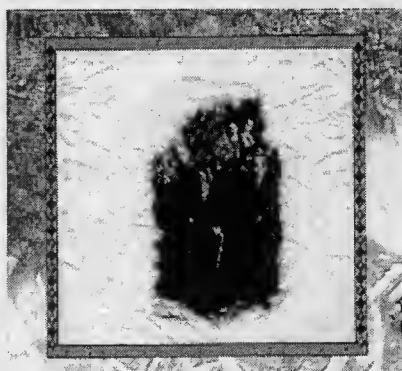
REVIEWS

Also, for whatever reason if you do not agree with what I have written please do not write and complain...it is only an opinion expressed, as is yours. Some releases may seem a little old for a 1998 review, however that all depends on when they were written (originally intended for publication elsewhere), when I obtained it (my list of releases I want always out weighs my budget) and that I thought it warranted a review anyway (no better

excuse with a debut issue). I have attempted to give all reviews adequate length as short reviews can never do an album justice, be it good or bad. You may also note that most reviews are positive, however there is specific reason for this. As I know what sounds I like, more often then not when I order something I already know what to expect, or at a minimum have been given a good recommendation. Here's hoping that record labels will come to the party to help diversify the contents of the review section for subsequent issues (and that others may want to also contribute reviews). For now read on and enjoy.

Allegory Chapel Ltd. (USA) "When Angels Fall" 1995 Charnel Music

Not being a huge fan of the overall noise scene I found this CD quite refreshing in its stylistic approach. While less intense and harsh than the previous cassette 'Demimonde Voices' this still owes a lot to its noise roots. On the opening track waves of mid range white noise swirls and evolves while composed keys are interjected giving a solemn feel. Track two "Trajectory Calculations" steps up a notch in harshness however retaining the swirling noise structure which is then continued into the next track (after a brief interlude provided by a short spoken intro). A highly processed voice makes an appearance through the waves and layers of sound with a young girl screaming "please let me out" which is quite unnerving in its pitch and intensity. Deeper noise elements in mid to low range embody track five "Escalate the Violence!" that is incessant in its more straight forward noise attack. The final track "Requiem for Thee Possessed" takes a more death industrial guise in it's low rumbling vibe and sampled female vocals. It then converts back to low harsh noise late in the piece, only for haunting female vocals to sweep the CD into a numbing conclusion. The width of sound has been well presented and the pieces of the total structure omitted from opposing speakers has been extremely well produced for an all encompassing effect. The contrasts present (via the use of both noise structure and composition) gives this a unique feel that works surprisingly well. Even without the more composed moments this release tends to hold more of a more listenable middle line that avoids the 'head fuck' scenario generally associated with noise.



Arcana (Swe) "Cantar De Procella" CD 1997 CoId Meat Industry

What can one say about Arcana that hasn't already been said?... like Dead Can Dance circa "In the Realm of a Dying Sun"...most anticipated debut album ever on CMI etc, etc.... Besides all this, everyone within this scene should know of or at the very least heard of Arcana's epic and sorrowful gothic classical music. Here we have the second CD from the duo and while it is a progression in overall sound from the debut it is again somewhat of a let down as was the case with the first album. I don't know if it is just me, but I have held this group in such high regard since their first few compilation tracks that I think I have come to just expect too much. Anyone thinking I am speaking poorly of this is clearly getting the wrong idea as this is truly a superb release. The dynamics of the songs gradually build as does the intensity of the male and female choral vocals which rise to soaring heights. Some tracks are based on the sounds and motion of the voice alone while others use the full epic structure of an orchestra especially focussing on the brass, wind and string sections. Two tracks here were also featured on the preced-

ing 3 track MCD, but I guess that was always intended to be a taster for this full length (too bad I got stung the price of a full length for a 3 track single CD.....). All of the 12 tracks presented tend to focus on the one theme and expand on it slightly over an average track length of 5 to 6 minutes. Maybe this is where the problem lies in that the tracks do not evolve and change enough to take the listener on the epic medieval journey that they so often promise, but somehow fail to fully deliver. I'm sure if the musical ideas and themes were merged over fewer songs Arcana would deliver an absolute masterpiece. Stand out tracks include the title track, the medieval folk tinged "the Chant of Awakening", "The Dreams Made of Sand" All that is left to be said, is that one must wonder why the more talented an artist is, the more critical the fans are..... As the reader you know the answer to if this should be included in your collection.

Archon Satani (Swe) "The righteous way to completion" CD 1997 Cold Spring

Archon Satani (Swe) "The final way to completion" 10" Pic disc 1997 Cold Spring I have chosen to review these two releases in one, given that the tracks were recorded at the same time. These works essential form the final ever recordings from this notorious group (although older works are scheduled to be re-released in the future). Since the early compositions of Archon Satani as a duo, through to the split and solo continuation of the project, it has become more minimalist oriented. (note: Tomas Peterson left to later form Ordo Equilibrium and Mikael Stavoststrand formed Inanna and also continued with Archon Satani). Treated waves of flowing sound rise and fall in a subtle rhythmic style (ala Thomas Koner) however these releases see the introduction of repetitive looping beats (not dance

beats of course) at various points in the tracks. These tend to break up the monotony, as there is not a hell of a lot happening over the combined 70 odd minutes of music. The passages where the beats are not utilized is somewhat like being trapped in a deep subterranean location where the only audible sound is the bedrock of the earth slowly being warped and cracked by tectonic forces. Overall I tend to prefer the earlier works of Archon Satani as a duo which where more varied and had a much more engulfing dark atmosphere. This point is further substantiated by the quality of the Archon Satani track featured on the new CMI compilation 'the Absolute Supper'. This track saw the reformation of Archon Satani as a duo to record one final (and great!) song as a tribute to the ultimate completion of the group. The members will now lay the Archon Satani legend to rest and to continue with their respective projects. Although I would not consider these to be the releases to be introduced to Archon Satani by, they would be a worthy addition to a music collection for anyone who has prior knowledge of the groups music. (note: the 10" is almost in certainty sold out by now as it was limited to 500 copies).

Archon Satani (Swe) "Memento Mori" CD & limited picture LP (399 copies) 1997
Memento Mori

Well, here we have a historic release from when Archon Satani were still a duo with the music being taken from a live performance on the 25th of May 1991. The music itself differs to the groups other studio outputs as the recording in essence is quite harsh. When I first obtained this on LP I figured some of the rawness of the sound was due to the vinyl format, however when I also picked this up on CD the harsh rawness was still present. Mid range harsh frequencies hum along with cavernous factory sounds, rhythms and noises reverberating underneath. Distorted vocals sporadically make appearances while each tracks flows forth merging into the next composition. Tracks "Insane with fear", "Ritual Murder" & "Hymn of Despair" make up the first three tracks which are all worthy live performances of material from the Virgin Birth (Bom Again) CD. To my knowledge the remaining three track have not been included on other albums (however I could be proven wrong!). Track four "Pater Miles" (when it gets going) has a bludgeoning heavy rhythms with vocals and sounds buried underneath. "Lost Souls of Eden" (track 5) gradually builds with the echoed drum sound, vocals and vocal samples to a passage with sampled choirs to then fall back to the repetitive drum loop and sampled classical radio tune and mid range frequencies. The final tracks begins with a sparse sound that again build to a harsh rhythms/ tune with what appears like radio static introduced into the mix. At 35 minutes this a reasonable short, disc however it remains as a document to the early death industrial scene giving those of us who will never get to experience such groups live a chance to at least hear what it would be like.

Blood Box (USA) "A World of Hurt" CD 1998
Malignant Records/ Katyn Records
 If the name of this group sounds slightly familiar it may be that you are thinking of 'Yen Pox', and not without good reason. Jason Hensley the name behind this project is actually half of the ambient/ drone group 'Yen Pox'. Whilst being on a

solo mission Jason treads on familiar ground covered by 'Yen Pox' but also tries to ensure that 'Blood Box' has its own character and quality.



The opening track 'Paradise' is stylistically 'Yen Pox' all the way, except for its focus on slightly more electronic/keyboard feel. Track 2 gets even more electronic with its make up of sampled and treated sounds meandering and evolving over a 10 minute span. 'Mother of Dust' includes a sampled spoken passage, whilst track 5 'Dawn of the Hunter' sees a composed keyboard passage and sampled acoustic guitar used to good effect which then employs a minimalist neo-classical passage to round out the song. Both themes of electronic and organic styled dark ambience are further explored over the remainder of the album. The final track 'inhale' is a short and strange piece of distorted factory noise/sound which actually sounds more akin to the latest Vond CD.

As has been said previously this CD is less organic and more electronic than 'Yen Pox' having an overall more disturbing undercurrent that can aptly be aquatinted with the release. Highly recommended dark ambient passages with other influences thrown in for good measure. The only other thing I can say about this CD is regarding the strange image that was chosen for the cover... make up your own mind.

Brighter Death Now (Swe) "Innerwar" LP 1996 Cold Meat Industry (CD on Release)

Mr R. Karmanik the brain behind CMI returns with his project to torture us with themes of moral decay and decadence. On this album we find Roger in a very angry and aggressive mood. For those who are unaware of the music of BDN it is generally termed 'death industrial' using horrific low ambient noise and percussion periodically being punctured by unworldly voices and chants. "Innerwar" is quite a departure from previous recordings, much more into the realms of noise music and power electronics but still retaining a structured industrial edge through repetition and looping drones. In this respect I feel it is one of his strongest releases to date. Overloaded looping drones grind on incessantly some at a high pitched velocity others at lower levels but no means less powerful. Sampled voices make periodic appearances throughout the record, some audible others indistinguishable. The track entitled "Sex or Violence?" in brief seems to sum up the themes behind BDN quite well. Further more side two opens with the track "little baby" which includes a sickening intro of a teenage girl recounted sexual abuse as a young child. This track obviously is in reference to the picture on the back sleeve which has a young girl reclining in a somewhat sexual pose (For those who prefer gore images the CD version is defi-

nately for you, having select napalm and autopsy slab photos). The finally of the album comes with a track entitled "WAR" with an extreme and distorted voice chanting the word over and over accompanied by the trademark overloading looping noise.

As I have the LP version I have been told that it does not pick up much of the high end noise present on the original recording. If this is true all I can say for anyone who chooses gets the CD version prepare for your ears to bleed!

Brighter Death Now (Swe) "Pain in Progress" CD 1998 Cold Meat Industry

The master of death industrial returns with a re-release of his first tape (CMI 03) ten years on as a tribute to the legacy of BDN, and what a release it is! Seven of the fourteen tracks made up the original "Pain in Progress" tape while the remaining seven are included for our pleasure/ torture taken from various compilation contributions from the late 80's to early 90's. Although being a decade old the tracks here still sounds fresh and undated and at its time "Pain in Progress" would have been milestone release. Although the current workings of BDN are moving towards power electronics/ industrial, the sound of this disc encompasses a more slow death ambient/ industrial style. Much here is in common with an earlier tape/ CD release entitled "The Slaughterhouse" with slow distorted noise rumbling along with the trademark sparse sound and grinding metallic rhythm. Some distorted and ghostly vocals are interjected through a number of tracks as though announcing some unspeakable horror while other dialogue samples outline some of BDN's themes. The only complaint I have is regarding a track entitled 'meat processing' which has a heavy yet tinny mid paced percussive rhythm that is too up front and runs in contrast with the overall BDN sounds and themes. This track is repeated at the end of the disc with a slightly heavier mix but my main point of complaint remains.

The minimal black packaging is stylish and simplistic as an obvious homage to the original artwork which compliments the obscure nature of the project.

Now all there is to do for the BDN completists is to look forward to the final completion with the release of "Greatest Death" CD. (This is essentially a compilation of tracks from the "Great Death" trilogy of which those owning all three parts were able to vote for their favorite tracks).



Caul (USA) "Crucible" CD 1996 Malignant Records

Well "Malignant Records" have done it again proving that there is much more to the ambient scene than what CMI has to offer by releasing the debut CD of the dark ambient artist Caul.

The works of Caul delve into minimalistic ambience as well as more structured compositions. The 70+ minute CD is quite filmic in nature and could almost be described as background music to the haunting elements of motion pictures. Subtle melodies, low droning percussion and haunting chants flow effortlessly throughout the length of the disc. The opening track 'Aurora' is a short dark ambient piece which flows into the next track which has slow rumbling percussion with floating noises and vocals sitting in the mid range. 'Behold' contains again sparse noises but this time with violins holding the feel and flow of the track. This concept of using strings is used in the following track 'Reduviid' and other subsequent tracks. The heavier mid paced percussion of 'Cluster' breaks the predominant feel of the preceding tracks while the music stays stylistically the same. Comparisons can be made to the more minimalistic works of Raison D'être while the dark ambient elements lean towards Lustmord. Once again another great album to create dark atmospheres for those appropriate times.

**Caul (USA) "The Sound of Faith" CD 1996
Katyn Records**

Hot on the heels of 'Crucible', Brett Smith is back with his second CD release under the 'Caul' moniker. Opening with a very 'Lustmord'ish brooding passage, the CD crawls out of the depths of the void with desolate organic sounds and processed synth atmospheres over a seven+ minute span. Track two launches into a short composed piece with plucked strings, chimes and marching rhythm. Track three 'Nature and Grace' takes the same string sounds to continue the themes of semi-composed and minimalist compositions over the CD's length. An overall religious type aura surrounds the music with space and distance being a common aesthetic between the dark ambient tracks and more composed ones. The tunes where present in certain passages remain sparse in delivery, conveying a somewhat dreamlike state. For want of a better comparison (or due to sheer laziness) Lustmord's name invariably comes up with the 'deeper' elements of the disc. (To be fair this release does have a character of it's own, I just guess that minimalistic and dark ambient music always tends to have that common thread normally associated with the long time standing works of Lustmord/ Brian Williams). For me this disc slips up and lets me down with track eleven 'Ankou' which is a full on "new age" style piece complete with sampled doves in the background. Apart from this "The Sound of Faith" is a strong body of work but has a little way to go before I would class this classic.

**Caul (USA) "Reliquary" CD 1997 Eibon
Records**

Continuing the trilogy of reviews this is Caul's third CD, and I must say it has finally reached the level that this project has hinted on over the first two CD's. Overall the vision here is more focussed which has resulted in a more composed body of work. This is not to say that the dark minimalistic passages have been totally forsaken of course. Textured and layered synth passages act as the undercurrent while slow melodies are accentuated by piano keys and other sampled string and wind instruments. All in all this has a less "new age" feel than the last disc overall being darker and bleaker. Some of the passages here are quite reminiscent of some of Graeme Revell's Hollywood soundtrack offerings, with

the works from the movie "the Craft" partially coming to mind. Track four 'A sigh is the sword of an Angel' focuses on a deep percussive rhythm with a haunting oboe tune and waves of atmosphere rising in the background. Track five 'the soul rising out of the vanity of time' is more in the dark ambient vein but also quite a bit more active than the standard type track in the genre. The pinnacle of the album is reached in track seven 'lights in the firmament of heaven' where the slow plucked tune bursts into crescendos of soaring angelic voices. The themes of dark ambience and minimalistic classical music are explored throughout the remainder of the disc with even some slight middle eastern influences fused into a few of the melodies. The packaging in itself is quite different with a get black slipcase that folds out into a fiery picture of cloud landscape. Caul are one group to keep an eye on as the prolific individual behind this project already has another couple of discs in the pipeline for upcoming release. I look forward to them.

**Cernunnos Woods (USA) "Awakened: the
Empire of Dark Wood" 1998
Cruel Moon International**

This disc was meant to have seen the light of day all of 2 to 3 years ago but has only surfaced at the beginning of 1998 for unknown reasons (This was meant to be first off the mark for Cruel Moon International but ended up being their third product). This CD takes guise under the form of medieval/folk styled ambience that seems to be forever increasing in popularity since the rise of the Mortis empire (and I mean both concept & business!). Although this lacks extensively in the realms of full compositions and well executed instrumentation (incidentally this is all produced on the

keyboard) it most certainly makes up for these areas in atmosphere. Horns, flutes and drums trudge forward with Bard Algot narrating stories through a number of tracks. For an American the spoken vocals come off especially well with flair and without a hint of a cheesy accent. Some tracks (ie: track four) don't work well at all as playing seems out of time and all over the place, however other hit the mark perfectly with mildly stirring and majestic pieces. I must also fully complement the digi-packaging that suits the music perfectly in its portal of a medieval atmosphere via photos and drawings. As I hear the entity behind Cernunnos Woods is now unhappy with this release in light of when it was recorded and in reference to current compositions. If this is the case all I can say is I look forward to future recordings.

**Coma Virus (USA) "Hidden" CD 1996
Side Effects**

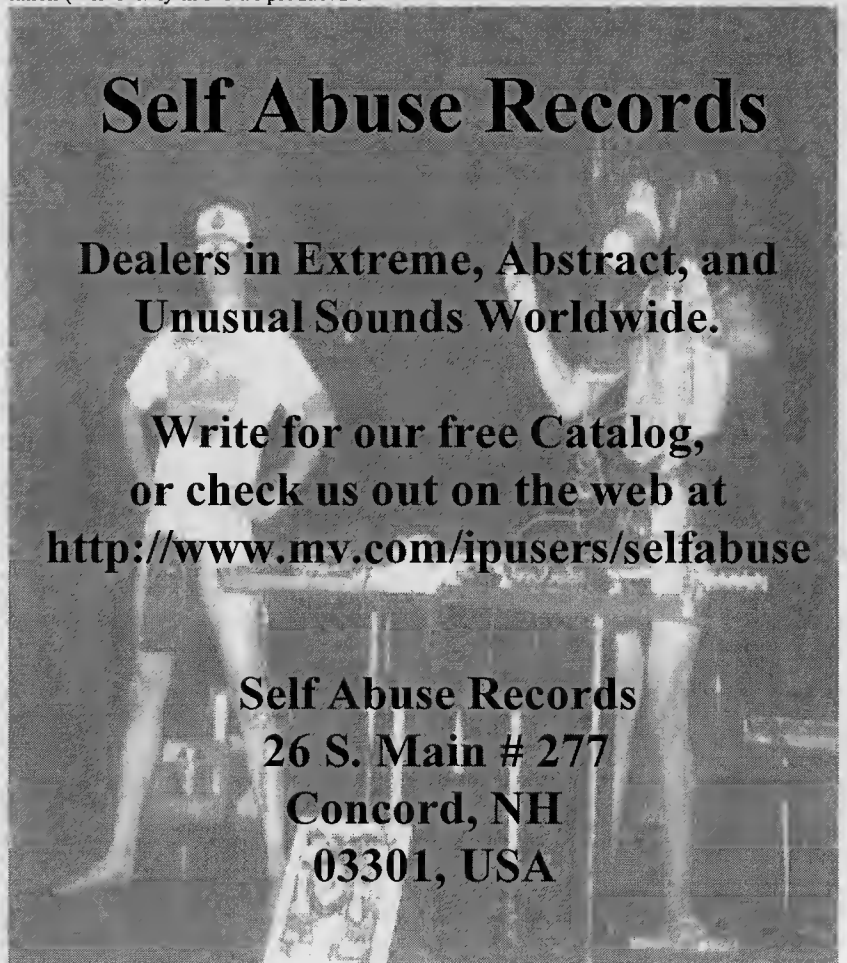
What can one say when it comes to the dark ambient genre? At the moment there are some truly great artists working in this field as is shown by some of the other reviews in these pages, with Coma Virus being no exception. As Lustmord is primarily Brian Williams' brainchild, he however does gain input from other people - one being Paul Haslinger. On the same note Coma Virus is primarily Paul Haslinger who also gains input from Brian (not to mention both Coma Virus and Lustmord are signed to the same label). Confused yet? Well for another interesting fact Mr Haslinger was a once a member of Tangerine Dream, so it certainly shows he has been in the ambient game for some time now. Coma Virus sits in the same realms as Lustmord frequents but does have a charm of it's own.

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When I first heard this I actually thought it was a Lustmord release using a different name. But with close concentration on the music, it tends to be more rhythmic and composed. The standard dark ambient elements are included, being sparse spacious sound, deep evolving rumbling noise and subtle melodies. Amongst the rumbling ambience keyboards have been mixed in (disguised very well) akin to a half remembered tune being played in the dark recesses of the mind. Dynamics are also important with the levels rising and falling in volume throughout the metamorphosis of the disc. Only four tracks are present but with a play time of fifty minutes the tracks range in length from seven to fifteen minutes which directly points to the slow evolving style that it encompasses. Vocals make an appearance on a few occasions but are used in a low chanting manner or have been electronically distorted so no actual words can be deciphered. Concept wise the release uses the theme that any creation of the mind can be considered a virus as it can only exist solely within the host. The theme is elaborated on in the cover with a very thought provoking passage. While other dark ambient artists use ideas of 'deep space' Coma Virus uses the ideas of the inner spaces of the mind and when viewed from this perspective while listening, it is truly fascinating. As always I am truly in awe of how this dark ambience is created as it is so far removed from other forms of 'music'. Both Coma Virus and the label Side Effects will be of great interest for any fans of this genre.

C17H19NO3 (USA) "Terra Damnata" CD 1996
Fifth Colvmn Records
 For anyone who is fanatical about In Slaughter Natives yet is frustrated by the slow progress of J. Havukainen in recording I.S.N CD's, I urge you to get a copy of this. What we have here is foreboding compositions that span electronic and orchestral realms which have mutated into a supreme blend of apocalyptic industrial. The themes and sounds presented on this release are quite foreign to what is normally associated with it's country of origin, being much more akin to a European release. Sampled voices and processed vocals interjected throughout, outline the concepts of the merging of man and machine, via a macabre evolution of the human species. Gothically influenced the orchestral compositions and atmospheres are presented in an eerie and at times a quite romantic guise. Owing a great deal to the paths previously forged by I.S.N, all comparisons are easily forgiven when apocalyptic industrial is done this well. Watch out for the upcoming CD scheduled for a late '98 release on Malignant Records.

Darrin Verhagen (Aus) "Soft Ash - Seven treatments of lethal atmospheric inversions (with a drifting narrative sense)" CD 1997
Dorobo
 Now the title of this CD says it all...only to an extent. Darrin Verhagen, better known for his works as Shinjuku Thief has produced this concept CD under a solo guise. The actual concept of the disc is the common thread here, as the music contained over 48 minutes/ 7 tracks has more the feel of a compilation. Darrin has taken inspiration from six historical points in time where humans have suffered death from airborne pollutants - from the killer fogs of 19th Century London through to Chernobyl. Further each track has been composed in a specific style, from iso-

lationist, electro - acoustic, organic to romantic. Each track also has a recommendation for a listening volume depending on which style it was produced in. The opening track stylistically comes across like Tomas Komer while tracks two and three resemble more radio static in low frequency tones. Track four (composed under 'romantic') comes across somewhat like Shinjuku Thief's "The Scribbler" CD with a poetic spoken interlude included. 'Chernobyl' (track five) is highly active with it techno/ tribal beats, while things calm down on the final two tracks. Track six is a low fi atmospheric piece that has utilized a basis of field recordings of thunder. The final track is filed under 'organic' with an anti-structure of simple and repetitive tapping sounds that are gradually overlaid to create a more complex beat pattern. This CD commands close concentration from the listener and does not work particularly well as background music, given its changes in direction from track to track. It is good to note the growing interest in experimental forms of music as two of the tracks were actually commissioned by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (Government based TV/ Radio) for a program called "The Listening Room". A highly interesting concept CD with the cover living up to the look and presentation of the label.

Decree (USA) "Wake of Devastation" CD 1997
Decibel/ Off Beat
 This is another gem of a release that I probably would have never been made aware of if it wasn't for the strength of recommendation that came from Malignant Records. This CD walks a fine line between harsh noise, death industrial, dirty techno and industrial (in the industrial 'band' type definition). Spanning 45 minutes over 10 tracks & consisting of both live and studio recordings, this is an immensely strong release that is varied yet relentless in it's approach and delivery. Starting with a track "Delusion" this is quite apt in misrepresenting what the CD is like in it's entirety. A strong mid paced dirgy techno beat surges onward with sampled noise flowing throughout the mix. Track two continues in much the same vein however the mix begins to get slightly harsher with the integration of aggressive processed vocals. The noise element becomes much more evident in track three "Who Dares?" in the form of a live instrumental recording where the noise flows in a mid ranged region with a reasonable depth of sound. The cavernous sounds of the beginning of "Madness Unveiled" gradually increase in intensity (that when played at high volume) surely threatens to destroy the undeserving sound system which the CD is being played on. The driving machinelike rhythms, processed into a barrage of sound (while being kept coherent by the undercurrent of bludgeoning beats) draws certain comparisons to the likes of Stratvm Terror & Mental Destruction yet not being derivative of any group in particular. Ultimately heavy in all aspects of the delivery (related to the genre's covered), this comes as highly recommended release.

Desiderii Marginis (Swe) "Songs over Ruins" CD 1997
Cold Meat Industry
 Sometimes I really don't understand the rational behind the release schedules of CMI. I had been waiting for this since 1995 when first hearing the track of "...and even wolves" CMI compilation CD, however this disc did not see it's release until mid to late 1997. Even CMI made a statement to the effect that "it had taken them ages to release this and that it should have been out much

earlier considering the great response it got". I can only hope that the wait for the second disc is not as long! Of the music herein, much harks back to the CMI sounds of the early 90's, which in itself is quite refreshing. Of anyone familiar with the CMI sound will recognize the trademark Swedish industrial/ ambient sounds. When I first heard this I knew next to nothing of the individual behind this project and still know relatively little (not that this should affect the music of course!). To put it simply this CD reminds me of a mix of raison d'être's early CD's mixed with the darker sounds of Archon Satani's 'Virgin Birth' CD. All of the necessary elements are present, dark flowing rhythms, choirs, bells and undercurrents of minimal orchestral compositions. Apart from the obvious influences this is a very strong disc with multitudes of its own character. This would have to rate as one of my favorite ambient/industrial disc's of '97 and originally I even felt that it was bounds ahead of the new raison d'être CD (I now consider both albums to be on the same pedestal). All I can say is that I am getting a little sick of CMI doing it once again!

Drape Excrement (?) "Born Dead" LP 1995
Art Konkret

Taking a leaf out of the Brighter Death Now camp this is 'death industrial' at its darkest presented here. Deathly heavy and dense noise drones slowly on with tortured and distorted vocals buried under many layers of sonic sludge. Some tracks utilize sampled voices (which don't really make reference to anything in particular), while each track tends to sustain a certain style over their short lengths. Again the comparisons to Brighter Death Now are to be made with this sounding somewhat similar to the "Great Death" sound (however I might ass that at times this makes B.D.N sound sonically 'clean'). 'The Lost Age' being the first track on side two is quite impressive with its overall depth of sound being more akin to the Lustmord style of ambience. The simple styled black and white LP cover complements the obscure music with scattered images of religious decadence and decay. I will say that this is not overly a highly original release due to the obvious sources of inspiration but in this circumstance I won't hold this against the project when it is done this good.



Each Dawn I Die (Swe) "Notes From A Holy War" CD 1997
Dark Vinyl Records
 Have you ever brought a CD simply on the strength of the members works in other groups? Well this was the case with this CD. The two members making up this project had previous workings in or are currently part of Megaptera, and with a title such as this one I thought I could not go wrong. All I can say is that this disc is so far from what I expected! The closest description I can come up with would be 'weird Euro-

pean electro/ ambient music' if that is anything to go by! At first I really disliked this, as it was not what I had expected but as I accepted it for what is was its true potential was realised. The concept of the album is based around the Spanish inquisitions and the witch trials of the 14th Century with the original inspiration being taken from the book "The Talisman of Death". The first track begins with a 'dub' style tune but a heavy bass kick keeps the beat dark and heavy. The vocal are done in a surreal talking manor describing a fantasy type world while the electro rhythms/ sounds float forward at a mid pace. Track two starts with an ominous and bombastic orchestration which could be compared to In Slaughter Natives however about 3 minutes into the song the music changes direction to a mid paced keyboard acoustic tune with deep/ clean male vocals. After another few minutes the track changes direction again where the music stops for two & a half minutes of text sampled from directly movies detailing the above themes. The tune floats in again for a short time only to return to the sampled spoken pieces. Once the music returns again a dark and brooding orchestral piece finishes off the track. Electro beats and rhythms return for track three to the point of if the music was slightly sped up it would constitute quite a dark dance track!. Sampled text/vocals and again the electro beats make up the lengthy 10 minute track four where the music fades in an out through stages of text and music. The finally of the album is embodied in the 22 minute track "Trader of Life" where the overall feel is more ambient although background looping and beats give it a 'driving' feel as it gets into a 10 minute groove. Low fi ambience filters in for the middle section before the electro elements return to complete the disc. This release is definitely not for everyone and no doubt by reading this review you will have a good idea of if you would like this sort of thing. Although 'Notes from a Holy War' is not half as dark as I expected and does contain many non standard ambient elements, for me it is one obscure release I am glad I found.

Endvra (Eng) "Great God Pan" CD 1997 E l f e n b l u t

As you would realize by now by reading my reviews, for me the aesthetics of a release are just as important as the strength of the music (there is nothing worse than a great release with cheesy packaging). Well this CD packaging is no exception. Encased in a black gold embossed cardboard box, the jewel case CD comes with 11 tarot cards whose graphics are truly dark to behold. And after all of this the music also measures up - what more could you ask for!? Endvra have certainly been busy over the last few years but the funny thing is 'Great God Pan' was their first CD to be recorded but was released as their fifth CD in 1997, some four years late. The infamous individual behind Candlelight Records delayed the CD by two years before Endvra severed all ties to find a more suitable label. Misanthropy Records came to the party but due to the rearranging of that label and the setting up of the side label 'Elfenblut' the disc was further delayed. As the CD represented the groups first major effort I initially was expecting a release which would show a group in their formative stages of composition arrangement but after hearing it, I feel that this is their strongest release yet. Some

remixing and reworking did occur but ultimately the songs have remained the same. By far it is there most orchestrated release with dark totalitarian compositions mixed with dark brooding ambient moments. There is a definite archaic, mysterious element to Endvra's sound which could be put down to the groups interest and involvement in magick. This element is emphasized with the track 'Hymn to Pan' being adapted from a Aleister Crowley poem. The disc open with a dark orchestral marching type track with a large emphasis on the heavy beat. Track two slows down slightly but continues in essentially the same feel. Track three 'Dark Face of Eve' has angelic soaring female vocals together with low male vocals and a dark undercurrent flowing through the song. Continuing on minimalist ambience with vocal chanting constitute track four 'the sickening skies' The spoken piece which constitutes the vocals for 'The truth is a sharp knife' are made even more convincing as the liner notes states that they were recorded on Holy ground - within Durham Cathedral. An almost 'baroque' feel is embodied 'Saturn's Tree' with the light overture and deep string sections. The finally of the fifty five minute disc comes with bombastic 'The Battle Song or Endvra' with a deep type vocal chanting words in the background. This release has certainly found the middle ground for the mixing of orchestrated industrial and minimalist ambience. Endvra are definitely one group that all CMI fanatics should be taking notice of.

Hagalaz' Runedance (Nor) "When the trees were silenced" 7" ep 1997 Elfenblut
Here we have an essentially a solo project of Andea Myer Haugen aka Nebelhexe of the now defunct Aghast. Anyone expecting a rehash of the ghostly atmospheres of Aghast will be rather taken aback by this 7". Taking on Viking folk aspect two slow marching type tracks are presented. The title track has tribal type drums with female vocals and a choir in the background with a light acoustic tunes added for atmosphere. Side two basically again consists of Andea speaking/ singing while the drums and choirs drone in the background with the tune also being carried with a folk violin. All in all not an amazing release but worth a listen if the ambient/ folk thing is for you.



Hazard (Swe) "Lech" CD 1997 Malignant Records
For those of you unaware this is the new project of Benny Neilson, infamous from the Morthound project of a few years back. Since dissolving his last project Benny has since resurfaced with a new project and new vision of where he wants to take his music. When first hearing this, it would be

advisable not to be expecting a reincarnated Morthound. However if one had to compare this, it is more along the lines of the highly minimalist work of 'This Crying Age' and the more low droning tracks off 'The Goddess how could make the ugly world beautiful'. Low washes of sound are complemented by slow evolving percussion, while light textures of melodies are interwoven into the sound scapes effortlessly. Liquidous motion and hazy electronic treatments exemplify Benny's overall vision of a surreal dreamscape. Certain parts threaten to evolve into more harsh sound scapes however this never actually eventuates. Light dreamy dub like rhythms emerge sporadically but tend to only meander in the foreground in an effort not to be totally dominant. Dualities in sound are forever present with soothing and relaxing sounds being juxtaposed next to claustrophobic and suffocating atmospheres. Overall this is dreamy and surreal which makes it particularly hard to review track by track as it works best as a complete body of work. Hazard also promises to be quite prolific with a number of new releases scheduled for this year and if his track contribution on the CMI 50# compilation is anything to go by Hazard should expect to go far.

Ildfrost (Nor) "Natanael" CD 1997 Cold Meat Industry

Well Ildfrost return with their second CD although admittedly I did not get to hear their debut effort. However I did hear one of their tracks of "...& even wolves hid there teeth" CMI sampler CD (which was quite good I might add). I do know that originally Ildfrost consisted of two member, one male, one female. On this disc it appears that the female member has left the fold, leaving the male counterpart to keep the Ildfrost flame alive. Now what about the music I hear you ask. Well all in all the music held within in not overly dark but more akin to orchestrated sorrowful/ dreamy music. The primary instrument is the keyboard but it is used in such a fashion that a rich sound is attained, being almost real (well as close as you can get in my book). The fourteen tracks flow forwards at a slow pace over fifty seven minutes, but periodically burst into moments of symphonic crescendos. The instruments include the full wind and string section of an orchestra, bells, timpani's, marching drums etc giving the release a very "classical" type feel.

Vocals are included in most tracks where the delivery is presented in monotone style, with the male voice talking in a European accent. The vocals are quite low in the mix and have a slight echo effect on them so following what is being said becomes quite difficult. In this respect the vocal tend to just blend into the background of the music as it flows along. The start of track three sees the Norwegian Black Metal influence infiltrating the music with some horrific high pitched shrieks. All in all I think the use of these vocals somehow undermines the validity of the release and in my opinion it would have been better to leave this out altogether. As the group does not have any real distinctive ties with the Black Metal scene, those outside of it would not understand such vocals thus the screams are likely to work against the release more than in its favor. Not to say that Ildfrost is music only, the packaging is also quite brilliant. It is presented in card gatefold sleeve (like a mini LP cover), but there is also a written booklet inside the gatefold. Now it is this booklet that is the interesting part. Not

only does it have the lyrics it also has a written conversation between two individual discussing the ideas and philosophies behind the work of Natanael. This approach I found refreshing as it is not simply someone preaching their ideas. Furthermore it also gives the opportunity for arguments and questions to be raised within the conversation. This is as much the same way that Friedrich Nietzsche present his philosophies in "Thus Spoke Zarathustra" by means of storytelling and the trials/ situations that Zarathustra faced. Again another fine release from the Cold Meat d e l i !



Iron Halo Device (USA) "The Collapsing Void" CD 1998 Malignant Records
The names associated with this Iron Halo Device CD (namely Stone Glass Steel & Phil Easter) have been familiar to me for awhile however I had not heard any output from the said project/artist. After hearing this CD I most certainly will be searching out some of the related releases! If it wasn't for the opening announcement that the disc forms a live performance (and the first one for that matter) I would have never picked it. This has to be one of the most well conceived and executed live performances for this genre that I have had the fortune of hearing. Opening with quick paced rhythmic percussion and doomy layers of background rumblings and textures, these gradually take over as more and more layers of suffocating swirling sounds are introduced over a 12 minute length. From a audile sense you have to take this a full piece of work as there are no breaks between sections other than the segmented pieces denoted by digital track insertion points. The merging of sampled sections of music, beats, instruments and vocals are juxtaposed perfectly with the artists own contributions to piece together a flawlessly flowing piece of live art. Static yet flowing deconstructionalist ambience, doomy bass riddled industrial and composed rhythmic electronics are just a few of the descriptions that come to mind, but by no means does this come close to doing this justice. There is just so much going here that my mind is spinning! Harsh yet beautiful, extreme yet calm, subtle yet energetic - the music has so many facets to it. The live portion of the disc fades out after nearly 50 minutes leaving me feeling numb and detached wondering what the section of the CD will present? Taken from home recorded demo's from 1995(I would hardly class this material as 'demo') the second part is also broken up into four 'tracks' Not as openly energetic, the tracks take a more straight forward doomy, ambient industrial route whilst travelling at a slower to mid pace. At one point I do believe I picked a noise sample has been taken from Lustmord's "Heresy"? I might

be wrong on this but it sounds awfully close to the unearthly wails on the said record. Some truly heavy sections of slow orchestral keyboards help to elevate the foreboding atmosphere of "The Expanding Void" whilst a textured and electronically treated vocal sample cuts in and out of the mix during the beginning passage of "Red Memory". Leading the disc into its conclusion is the electronically treated ethic/ middle eastern inspired sounds of "A Passion Vessel". The packaging is top notch (also coming from the genius behind this) and has a particularly interesting excerpt from a court case where it appears that Phil was subjected to a court trial for alleged breach of copyright regulation (related to the sampling and deconstruction aesthetic technique of his music production). For an artist who deserves much wider recognition than he actually has you wonder why a corporation would bother? I gather that both the artist and label would have risked further legal persecution with the issuing of this release, therefore I commend both for being brave enough to bring this to the masses (albeit however selected those masses actually are!). I am truly glad I have experienced the sheer energy and power of Iron Halo Device.

Lustmord (Eng) "Strange Attractor/ Black Star" 12" 1996 Plug Research
When I ordered this I was only really buying it for its collectors value not for the music. That being said, the reason I did not expect much was that I assumed that the sparse dark ambience that Brian Williams presents would be lost amongst the static of an LP. Boy was I wrong! This has to be the most powerful LPs I own (and the artwork suits the release perfectly). The two track present are extended remixes of some of the material from "Where the Black Stars Hang" CD however some source material from an earlier release "Heresy" has been mixed in. For those unfamiliar with Lustmord, he does not create music as such, but dynamic flowing and evolving darkness. Track 2 (black star) totally blew me away first listen and is undoubtedly one of the most apocalyptic pieces that Lustmord has produced thus far. Words can not even come close to describing the all consuming darkness of this release thus it is best to leave this review short and obscure like the mastermind behind Lustmord.

Macronympha (USA) "Intensive Care" CD 1998 Self Abuse Records
Now before I begin with the review I will make it known that I am not a huge connoisseur of the noise genre so any points made here are purely from my stance on this style. This disc is one of the first perks that I have gained since starting this magazine, with this promo CD coming my way after doing the rounds looking for advertisers. To start with I can say that this lives up to what I have come to expect from noise music, both from a sound and visual perspective. The full colour 10 page booklet has various morgue and hospital patient pictures intermixed with extreme pomographic imagery. Obviously these have been used to present the 'music' for their shock value (they certainly hit the mark there). And what of the sounds? Well the 72 minute disc is broken up into 4 'tracks', but you are hard pressed to pick the change from one to the next. This is to say two things - one that they generally sound the same and two - that each track is all over the place in terms of focus and direction. The basis of the

noise is extreme in its delivery with full on obliterated frequencies and electronic squeals in a mid to high pitched sound range. The attack is incessant and brutal with little let up, apart from a few lulls to give the listener a short lived reprise before it hurtles headlong back into 'headfuck' t e r r i t o r y . As was said before I feel that this lacks focus as it sounds as someone is flipping through channels of static frequencies on a radio. Some parts hint at becoming structured with looping noise only to change just as quickly, moving off on another tangent.

I may have not fully got the point with this style but I guess if simply extremities is the basic concept behind this, structure and direction become incidental. One thing I do find interesting about this music is just how do these artists go about creating the noise in such an angry guise? For anyone more versed in noise than I, would probably get a real kick out of this.



Megaptera (Swe) "Deep Inside" MLP 1997 Slaughter Productions
Here is a limited mini LP from Megaptera that features one unreleased track and two tracks that were previously featured on two Slaughter Productions Compilations. Track 1 "Brian Ghost" (being the unreleased one) is heavily rhythmic with a variety of treated sounds and almost upbeat percussive sounds. This track is quite a lot more straightforward in style than the haunting atmospheres I have generally associated with Megaptera. Track 2 "Lurking Fear" does not disappoint with its more classic type Megaptera sound and structure. Washes of sounds rise and fall gradually building giving off the exact impression of the tracks title. Midway through the sounds become more structured as the track consolidates itself into a slow coherent atmosphere. The last track (being also the title track) begins with a more 'wet' floating type structure which is more sporadic in its delivery. A sampled piano tune makes a brief appearance before the track again lurches back to the sparse void of ambience. Towards the end of the track some angelic chorale vocals and injected into the mix along with some rantings of a religious nut. The packaging of this goes to show that now all 'dark' type music needs to be encased in black. The white foldout sleeve is complimented with a simple grey boarder and the obligatory pictures of mummified bodies. This is one of just a few current Megaptera releases that will surely propel them to the front the dark/ death ambient genre - a position which has wrongly eluded them thus far. A worthy addition to any record c o l l e c t i o n .



Megaptera (Swe) "Curse of the Scarecrow" CD 1998 Release Entertainment
 The CD first conceived and recorded back in 1995 has finally seen its proper release and not a moment too soon (don't the clichés make you sick!). Opening with a highly atmospheric yet extremely bass heavy track called 'Disturbance', this adequately sets the tone for the 50 minute CD. Claustrophobic swirls of sound merge and evolve while ultra slow pounding beats reverberate underneath. Track two is slightly more focused with a slow machine like drone gradually making way for more clattering sampled sounds and slow beats that aptly reflects the track's title (Cog-Wheel Machinery). 'Don't Desecrate the Dead' (track three) ups the stakes yet again forging headlong into some of the most foreboding death industrial that has ever been produced. Taking a middle line with sustained tones and a repetitive beat/ sound the track is broken up with sampled voices taken from one movie or another. Sampled choral voices also make an appearance giving the perception of being part of the proceedings of a macabre church gathering. Things are toned down on the title track and, being more minimal death industrial with obscure vocal samples included and partially buried in the mix. During the track 'More Disturbance' in amongst the swirling atmosphere and voice samples a repetitive middle eastern type tune plays out its part as the track gradually builds in intensity. The remainder of the album does not disappoint keeping the flair to the well worn death industrial structure, using intense atmosphere and repetitive clattering noises and beats. The cover art suits the CD perfectly being presented in black and silver featuring various images of skull/ bone collections. The most unusual thing about the photos is that they appear to have been taken inside a church with the bones and skulls being the major focal point of the interior design. Strange indeed! All in all a great CD that should get Megaptera the recognition that they duly deserve.

Necrophorus (Swe) "Yoga" 10" Pic. Disc 1997 Yantra Atmospheres
 The always productive Peter Anderson (of better known Raison D'etre/ Stratvm Terror fame) has returned for his second release (after a debut CD) under the Necrophorus moniker. As much as I liked the debut CD I found it patchy in places and some of the vocal treatments got slightly on my nerves. Nevertheless the sounds presented on this vinyl are much more to my liking. For a bit of background, this item is actually released on Peter own label, with this being his first product. Drawing away from predicable inspiration Peter has dedicated this 10" to his dog with some of the source/ sound material actually hav-

ing been taken from his pet! Further tribute is shown to "Ronja" by being featured on both sides of the picture vinyl!!! As for the music this generally fit in the slow minimalistic school, with washes of sounds and strange noises flowing and evolving. Track one begins with manipulated sounds with a minimalistic rhythm structure which flows forth for about five minutes. A this point a rising/ falling 'spacey' type sound sample is introduced which extend to the completion of the track. Track two is basically an extension of track one in style & sound except it has slightly more going on with the movement of the atmosphere. Towards the middle to end of the song a light middle eastern composition is overlaid to good effect. Generally both tracks follow a similar construction (titles Yoga 1 & Yoga 2) and could potentially make up the one composition if included on a different format. In reference to the source material some of the strange noises that I could detect in the background included his dog breathing, eating & pushing a food bowl around on the floor! As much as this sounds like it wouldn't work it gels surprisingly well. (I guess no one may have picked these sounds if Peter hadn't announced this was dedicated to his pet). Anyway, anyone interested in getting this better move quickly if they want to obtain this as it is limited to only 315 copies!!

Ordo Equilibrio (Swe) "141" 7" Pic. Disc 1997 Cold Meat Industry
 Once again CMI never cease to amaze with the artistic production of their products. This picture 7"EP is impressive enough with its runes, roses and symbols, but you are also treated to a full colour sleeve. Both tracks included on this are exclusive to this release and showcase two sides to the 'Ordo' sound. Track one ("In the grassy fields where the world goes to sleep. We kissed this world Goodbye") features the always impressive basis and inclusion of a repetitive acoustic guitar to build the backbone of the sound. Keys, noises & sampled sounds complement the acoustics and monotone male/ female vocals. Track 2 ("War for the Principle of Balance. Nature seeking Equilibrium") is more sparse and focuses on a more post-industrial approach which comes across as quite moving and anthemic. Beginning the track are bell chimes, slow snare beats and commanding spoken vocals which then breaks into a militaristic semi-composed neo-classical tune only to fall back to the beginning structure. This format of the song is repeated throughout it's five odd minute length. My main love in Ordo Equilibrio has always been the use of acoustics to build atmosphere and this release further cements their brilliance in this style. And finally the title represents "eye for eye" and not 'one hundred & forty one' as some have coined it!! Oh, and limited to 1313 copies of course.

Ordo Equilibrio (Swe) "Conquest, Love & Self Perseverance" CD 1998 Cold Meat Industry
 Well here we have it, the long awaited third sermon from the male/ female duo Ordo Equilibrio. And where have they chosen to take the listener with this release? Their disdain for the Christian faith has not been dulled however they have further expanded on their interest in S&M via their lyrics. Thirteen tracks are showcased here over a 50 minute span however this time all of the tracks feature lyrics and vocals. This is as opposed to the previous two CD's that had ambient/ industrial passages intermixed with more composed tracks. Opening with a foreboding

horn section and looped laughter a marching snare drones on whilst the spoken monotone vocals of both Chelsea and Tomas present the lyrics in a cold and unfeeling manor. The acoustic side of Ordo is presented on track two with the looping acoustic riff and light keys filling out the sound. Track three expands on some of the ideas explored on the first album, with the cracking of a whip utilized to form part of the sample rhythm used. The acoustic track found on the previous 7" is featured here, being a good inclusion due to its sheer quality and atmosphere. The track from the CMI 50 compilation is also included, however has undergone a slight remix with an echo effect on the vocals being the most obvious part. In my opinion this is the epitome of Ordo's sound and will remain one of my favorite tracks that they have produced thus far. Track 8 ("The blind are leading the blind are leading the blind are leading the blind") is quite up tempo with its looping industrial beat and repetitive vocal lines and tune. In amongst the honing of their sounds some more folk elements have made an appearance in the form of folk marching drums and the use of a mouth harp on one track.



With the cover artwork we are treated to a somewhat humorous 'band' photo. The picture shows a naked female on all fours with a skull and red candle balanced on her back whilst Chelsea (holding an teddy bear) and Thomas (holding a whip) are kneeling behind her. The front cover shows a picture of Chelsea dressed a school girl posing with dagger and lollipop (with a black background, red roses and the Ordo logo filling out the visual). Although the CD is not as progressive as I may have initially hoped this is a solid CD that remains focused throughout its entirety without loosing its direction. Another essential items for your CD collection.

Proiekt Hat (Swe) "Lebensunwertes Leben" LP 1998 Cold Meat Industry
 Here we go with a review of quite an obscure release from the Cold Meat camp. Admittedly I know next to nothing about this project however when it was billed as 'old school Swedish industrial' I could not resist. Overall in structure this is very minimalist 'factory' styled industrial. The record starts with a mid paced semi distorted machine rhythm that flows forward but does not really get anywhere over the distance covered. Track 2 'Dislocator of the Souls' is probably my favorite track as it is a bit more structured in the B.D.N style and sound. The next track is more cavernous than its predecessors that rounds out the first side with a short and slow piece of ambient industrial. The second side starts with a lo-fi distant rumble

with more mid range sound rising and falling in the mix over a lengthy track. The final track of the LP remains slow moving but has a more electronic feel with some laid back soothing yet harsh type noise (if this was sped up and more forceful it could possibly pass for power electronics). The tracks that make up this release are taken from various recording between 1992-97 but if these tracks have ever appeared elsewhere is anyone's guess as there is little to no information included on the sleeve. Glancing over the artwork it is easy to see why it is limited to 500 hand numbered LP's. It would be guaranteed that any politically correct individual would most certainly take offence to the anti-Semitic cartoon & symbol, photos of abused children and a person of the 46+2 variety. Overall this LP is good however I find it slightly unusual for CMI given their current directions of releases.

Orphx (Can) "Fragmentation" CD 1996
Malignant Records

Orphx taking on a tribal power electronic/ death industrial guise this remains one of the interesting CD's that I own. Sounding like a small piece of many groups it is blended together suitably to be able to retain its own character. A very "B.D.N" styled track opens this with the low rising factory industrial vibes and processed vocals. "Layers of Dura" has static harsh and heavy beats that are produced to the point where the whole mix threatens to collapse under the heavy distortion.

Text and spoken word passages float somewhere in the middle of the mix being indecipherable amongst the infernal clatter. Early mz412 comes to mind more than once especially during the heavy tribal beats of "Ekstasis", complete with its screamed and distorted vocals. Hard listening is abound during the start of "Sepsis" with its highly disorientating use of the balance dial whilst when it calms down to the percussion brings to mind the repetitive nature of some of Deutch Nepal's noisier efforts.



The screeching vocals of Christina and Richard are used in number of tracks to add an unnerving effect. While not being so up front & in your face they are mixed into the background of the aggressive tribal percussion and distorted electronic attack. There is some let up during lengthy

9 minute "Words Once Spoken" track where it takes a slightly nosier take on the Yen Pox styled drone ambience only to evolve into a full holocaust of fried frequencies. The final track hints again at the use of the drone ambient genre, which in itself is a relief after the ear damaged sustained from the preceding tracks. Throwing in other names such as Mental Destruction and Memorandum for further comparison this should be leading you in the right direction of what to expect. Being aggressive, punishing and repetitive, the music manages to retain its full focus of force over the 70+ minute length. This is music to be played loud for full harrowing effect.

Puissance (Swe) "Back In Control" CD 1998
Cold Meat Industry

Well, as the title suggests Puissance are back with their second full length offering and are supposedly "back in control". First off I will question to if the wait for this disc was worth it and sadly I must admit the answer is no. However this is not to say this is at all a bad disc. My major complaint is of the eight tracks only three are new. Two tracks were originally featured on their limited 7"EP "Totalitarian Hearts", along with their contribution from the CMI Anniversary compilation. Further, as the disc is only 40 minutes in length it seems a little short for the time frame between discs. Well anyway on with a review of the music. I will admit that there has been a definite progression since the debut effort with the duo delving further into a mix of militaristic

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neoclassical orchestral music and dark industrial styles. The first track is a low-key industrial piece with some composition included in the background. The disc takes a leap forward with track two into a more composed orchestral track with heavy slow marching drumming and a slow moving yet stirring melody. As track three arrives I will crown it as being the best track of the disc (which was the same song from the CMI 50# comp). This song is a full classical piece that begins with a sad & somber tone but then periodically breaks into apocalyptic crescendos over its 5 minute length. Spoken word vocals are included in both tracks 2 & 3 which gives the listener some interesting insight into the philosophy of the group. Track 4 falls back in a dark minimalist industrial vein with vocal samples of a controversial nature being intertwined (i.e.: detailing subjects of recreational murder, torture, bondage, a police interview with the British serial killer who buried victims under the floorboards in his kitchen etc). As the samples are kept low in the mix and have a slight effect on them, half the fun is trying to make out exactly what is being said! Track 5 (also featured on the 7") is a great listen with its full distorted production, fast and heavy marching drumming and the ranting vocals. Much of the charm of this song lies in the sustained notes and sounds in the background with the heavy rhythm drumming moving it forward at a fast pace. Tracks 6 & 7 yet again play around with the juxtaposition of orchestral and industrial styles further cementing their own style and sound. The final track "Totalitarian Hearts" (which takes its name from the title of the previous 7" EP) will be very controversial due to the lyrics and I can say without a doubt they will definitely be misinterpreted. Again this song is an orchestral marching type song but has a more folkish element due to the accompanying flute tune. The vocals in this song are less commanding, possibly being even a little condescending in style and tone. In regards to the last line of the lyrics of this song, from my knowledge of Puissance's stance it appears to be at odds with other lyrics and ideas contained on the album. (As I don't want to fall into the trap of misinterpretation, give the lyrics in the booklet a read and see if you can determine exactly what I am getting at). As can be seen the album is basically split between industrial type tracks and neoclassical orchestral tracks. As much as this sounds like a contradiction in sound the two styles work surprisingly well. Although far from being a classic release it is yet again a solid offering from the Cold Meat camp.

Raison D'etre (Swe) "Reflections from a Time of Opening MCMXCI" CD 1997 Bloodless Creations
I imagine that the upcoming Australian label of 'Bloodless Creations' would have scored quite a coup with the release of this disc. As the label is relatively unknown in the ambient field it would be an understatement to say that many other ambient labels would kill to have opportunity to release an artist of Raison D'etre's caliber. Somber sounds and dark atmospheres are what Raison D'etre does best by utilizing a deep spiritual undercurrent and dark twist on the catholic religious type sounds. Slow rhythms and beats are complimented by lush compositions that don't rise to spiraling heights but choose to keep a minimalist evolving tone. Predominantly this disc is a collection of Peter Anderson's early works when Raison D'etre first surfaced early in the

1990's. The majority of tracks were originally released by 'Old Europa Café' on an MC from a few years back entitled 'Conspicuous', however the 8 tracks from this are mixed up with a 5 previously unreleased tracks. All tracks have been reordered and remixed to complete quite an impressive document of how Peter has evolved with his compositions & is a strong representation of both past works and future directions. A disc for fans of Raison D'etre and the Cold Meat Industry sounds alike.

Raison D'etre (Swe) "In sadness, silence and solitude" CD 1997 Cold Meat Industry
With little fanfare surrounding the release of this disc I was quite surprised when the promo disc arrived in the post. Before this time there was absolutely no rumors or mention of when to expect a new CD, but here it was! Peter has managed to be quite diverse with his releases while still encompassing the trademark sounds, with this disc being no exception (this is his 4th - not including the 'Reflections... CD). To say the music enclosed on the album is sparse is an understatement. Peter has definitely mastered the art of subtly knowing that what is left out is often more important than what is left in. Stylistically Raison D'etre has previously been reasonable composed, however this release sees a departure more towards the realms of dark isolationist ambience. I was very disheartened when first experiencing this to the point of writing it off but it wasn't until after five or so listens that I really began to appreciate it's sparsity. The backbone of this album is a flowing current of evolving sound (akin to Lustmord) that works on a multitude of levels. The sounds evolve and metamorphosise over the length of the disc with some more composed moments of keys, bells, rhythms and catholic type chanting sporadically placed throughout. It would also appear that some of the darker, harsher sounds have been influenced by another of Peter's side projects namely Stratvm Terror. Of the six lengthy tracks, track two is the most composed with it's mid paced rhythm flowing forward with lush keys and vocal chants. This feel is also again reproduced towards the completion of the album. This album is dark yet ultimately beautiful to the point of being indescribable, which one must hear to fully comprehend. Undoubtedly Peter Anderson's best work as Raison D'etre yet. (note: I only recently discovered that this disc is compromised of both live recordings and studio works - unbelievable!).

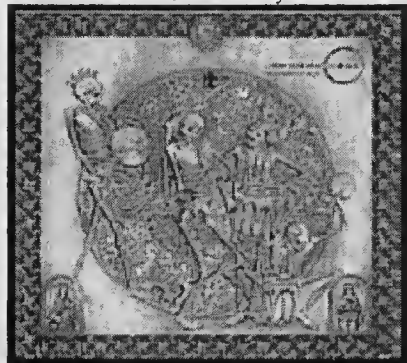
Sanctum (Swe) "The answer to his riddle" 10" pic. Disc 1998 Cold Meat Industry
What can one say about Sanctum? They are surely one of the most innovative bands within any genre of music at this point time as they cover so many styles and themes within their music. For me I do believe that there is a certain commercial potential for this group with their perfect mix of theatric music combined with enough industrial sensibilities and a heavy dose of moving melodies. After such a stunning debut album as 'Lupus in Fabula' this 10" is a bridging release to their upcoming album. The title track here has also recently been featured on the CMI "Absolute Supper" compilation, which is easily their most commercially viable song to date. Beginning with a classical type vibe, when the track hits its industrial phase the powerful female vocals soar over the driving and distorted samples. Heaven forbid if I was to refer to this as 'pop'

music but that's exactly what it is in its own quirky way. 'Madelene' is the next track to follow that is more laid back and theatrical in presentation with strings and wind instruments making up the majority of the structure. A dark twist is taken in the song when earth shattering heavy beats enter and eventually take over the mix along with harsh aggressive spoken vocals and more sweet female vocals. Side two begins with a stunning remix of 'in two minds' (a track from the debut) to which I am still unsure to which version I like better as both are stunningly great. This is emotional industrial band music at its best. The final track 'euphoria' is almost a throw away piece as it is very short with a repetitive sample and vocal overlay. Not really worth a mention in comparison with what else is on offer here. Apart from the stunning visual presentation of the picture disc EP the cover is more artistically personal than CMI's normal output with its transparent 'tracing paper' over wrap. Might I add this is limited to 1000 so I suggest you act fast.

Shinjuku Filth (Aus) "Raised by Wolves" MCD 1997 Iridium
The nastier, dirtier and more technology & techno orientated alter ego of Shinjuku Thief returns with this second offering of a mini CD. The music contained within actually made up 35 minutes of the musical backdrop of the Handspan Theatre Company's show (also entitled 'Raised by Wolves') which was performed in Melbourne, Australia in October 1997. A harsh rhythm/techno type structure makes up the predominant sound however none of this is remotely commercially orientated. A certain 'junk' type style is evident with vocal snippets, sounds and samples entered randomly into the mix giving it quite an unstructured cut and paste sound at times. Heavy rhythmic techno drumming moves many of tracks along at a blistering pace with some distorted guitar saxophone and keys added in certain sections. Other tracks slow things down slightly with heavily manipulated distortion rounding off the chaotic mix of beats & sounds. Track six has a slight departure in sound more akin to the classical type sounds of Shinjuku Thief's 'The Scribbler' which morphs into a techno dub song towards the end. Taken out of the context of the stage show this release sometimes appears to be patchy and disjointed without the complimentary visuals, however there is still merit to be found within the music. Although mostly very removed from the sounds of Darrin's other works, this is nonetheless an interesting release and worth a listen if you are a little open minded to more varied sounds of a techno mix with a dark undercurrent.

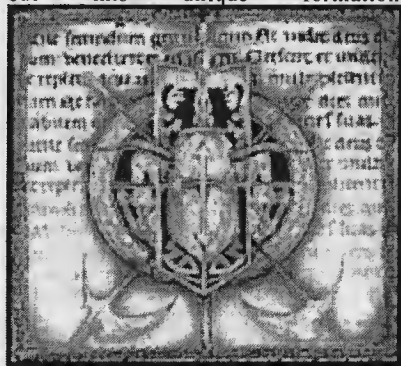
The 3rd & The Mortal (Nor) "In This Room" CD 1997 Music for Nations
(This review may not be typical of the rest of the albums presented here but I still think it is worthy of a listen for those how listen to a wide variety of styles of music). Well, well. Since the departure of Kari Ruslatten after the bands debut CD this band have really changed direction and not for the worse I might add. Gone are the folk influence replaced by prog rock, blues and jazz influences. This is the bands third full length and the second with their new female vocalist Ann-Mari Edvadsen. (not including the MCD "nightswan") As fantastic a vocalist Kari was I feel Ann-Mari's style of singing better suits the type of music the band are currently writing.

Many of the songs have a floating, emotional feel to them and just meld one into the other like travelling in a dream. The track "So pure" sees the band in a full jazz mood with Ann-Mari experimenting with the vocals rather than just having the passive sweet female voice. This experimentation is taken further in the tracks "sophisticated vampires (to the point of being disharmonic) and "did you" which has her screaming in an aggressive voice asking "did you kill me, did you bury me?". On some tracks no vocals are present, with them simply acting as a musical bridge to float you to the next piece on offer. This makes the CD progress really well as a single piece of music rather than just a collection of tracks. Distorted & acoustic guitars, grand piano, keyboards, tapes, and samples (& drums of course) have been the main ingredients of choice but as the band have six members all active in the song writing process one can be assured they are not one dimensional. The music has a top notch production and the studio has been used extensively to produce a rich and diverse album that is not just a taped live representation of the band. I will admit this band will have lost many along the way from the more extreme scenes but they certainly won't shake me that easily. It is the bands willingness to experiment with influences and styles which helps them remain fresh and undated to my ears.



...the Soil Bleeds Black (USA) "The Kingdom & its Fey" DLP 1997
Cruel Moon International
Firstly to anyone thinking of buying this, act quickly and get the double LP version as it has 10 bonus minutes of music not on the CD, not to mention it being limited and the layout being heaps better. I'm sure not that many people are aware of this strangely titled group but anyone who knows a thing or too about the record label CMI will have at least heard the name. Most of the music on this release is not actually new to me as I was lucky enough to snare a copy of their two earlier tape releases (limited to 100 each) which comprised most of the tracks herein. The first time I heard this I was a little taken aback by the upbeat folky elements as I was expected mostly dark music akin to what Mortuus is doing. Over a number of listens the actual ingenuity is revealed. It is heavily based on synthesized percussion and melody but used in manner to express folkish beats, cymbals, horns, flutes, trumpets etc. All of the tracks are fairly short (there are 30 tracks on the DLP) but this means an ample amount of variety. Many different themes are explored through slower tracks but also many uptempo sections can be found. Male vocal in a talking/chanting style enter on a few occasions but there are also female vocals interwoven more periodically. The use of background sound effects and vocal samples add to the atmosphere and help carry the feel of a concept and story be-

ing played out. Admittedly this folk inspired medieval style of music will not be for everyone but if this review sparks your interest, do make an effort to seek out this unique formation.



...the Soil Bleeds Black (USA) "March of the Infidels" CD 1998 Draenor Productions
Back with their second full length CD (I hear that there has also already been another tape album and third CD, with the fourth and fifth in production) the highly productive ...the Soil Bleeds Black continue where the last CD left off. There has been minimal if any change in style, sound and production from the last album, thus the above review is still typically applicable. Background dialogue and sound samples used to illustrate battles and other themes have been sampled from Braveheart and other movies I can't pick. Bard Algol of Cemunos Woods also pops up on one of the tracks with his distinctive vocalizations. Now for a couple of gripes. My main concern with this project is the lack of progression and sound between albums. If it is simply a matter of churning out tracks with little thought to constantly progressing, they risk losing the interest they have generated thus far. Furthermore I wonder in it's current guise how far this style can be taken. Spanning 16 tracks over 37 minutes this is significantly shorter than the first album which questions if the amount of proposed albums could be shortened by consolidating material. These are just a few minimal concerns so if previous material caught your attention this won't disappoint. As with the last album the cover art is distinctive and impressive straight from the hand of one of the members.

Trial of the Bow (Aus) "Rite Of Passage" CD 1997 Release Entertainment
After the exceptional "Ornamentation" MCD from 1995 Trial of the Bow return with their debut full length. In the few years between the two recordings it appears that the duo's stylistic approach to their song writing has altered slightly. While the MCD flowed together as a piece of ethereal/ tribal ambience the new CD seems to consist more individual tracks. Ten tracks are on offer all being of a different nature and theme while still using the common threads of middle eastern sound and structure. Trial of the Bow have managed to use the middle Eastern sounds to create dark brooding and emotional music without giving the feel of being in a Buddhist temple. A definite highpoint for the group is that no keyboards or electronic instruments are used. What is heard are the all real thing which gives a natural and authentic flavor that is so often lost with synthesized sounds. The CD opens with the track "Father of the Flower" and is a mid paced tune with tabla drums, acoustic guitar, eastern and western string instruments and soaring background chanting vocals.

"Ubar" is the next song which is slightly more up tempo with the basic structure being of percussion and wind instruments with the accompaniment again of an acoustic guitar. Track three "the promise" resembles the floating feel of the MCD in it's slow moving pace which has a cello brooding under the strong percussion. This theme flows into the next track "Serpent" this time with a sorrowful flute tune carrying the

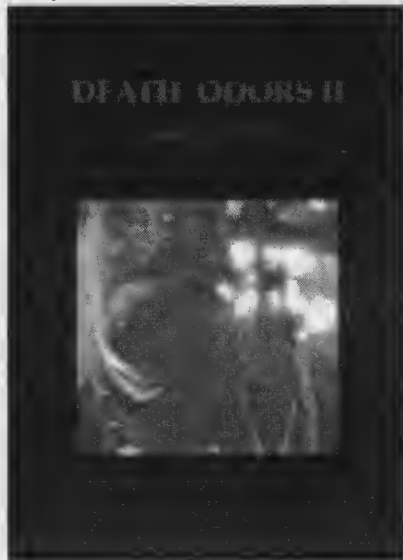
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Track five is a departure from the other songs as for me is one of the highlights although it has the least happening. Being extremely hypnotic the songs floats along by the sounds of bowed instruments without using an actual tune. Notes/sounds flow into one another and evolve over the length of the 6 minute track. Track 8 uses a recorded to my ears which sounds more of a Baroque style while the percussion remains firmly rooted in the middle eastern style. The finally of the album comes by the name of "Alizee" with it's deep reverberating bowed double bass rumbles while male vocals chant a haunting tune.

In comparison to the MCD many more themes have been explored with this release, but at the same time it seems the flow of the album has been sacrificed for the stature of the individual tracks. One theme will be experimented with but before you can get fully engrossed within it moves on the next track where another theme will be explored. In this respect repetition is avoided. This is a minor complaint on my part and by no means reflects on the quality of this release. Obvious comparisons can be made to elements of Dead Can Dance but Trial of the Bow have definitely managed to carve themselves a niche within the world music realms. It will be the darker elements of this group that will attract interest from the dark ambient and metal scenes but still an open mind is a definite prerequisite for this album. Great interest has been shown in this group in the international sphere but sadly they still remain relatively unknown within their home county. A definite shame if they do not gain the exposure in Australia that they so deserve.



Stratvm Terror (Swe) "Pain Implantations" CD 1998 Malignant Records
Fresh off the press this is the brand spanking new CD on Malignant Records further solidifying the high standard of releases that has preceded it (Cheers Jason for provided me with a promo copy!). For those unaware this is the second CD from Stratvm Terror, after the 1995 "Pariah Demise" CD and two previous tape releases preceding that. This project is a side project of Peter Anderson (better known for outputs as raison d'être) who works with another individual by the name of Tobias Larsson to bring forth the sounds of decadence presented here. Whilst Peter's out-

put in other projects has been sorrowful and beautiful this steers well clear of that territory driving headlong into inspiration derived from aggression and pain. The aptly titled CD "Pain Implantation" is probably a good description of the music, given the focus of the approach. Sparse and suffocating atmospheres float forth while distorted noise samples are injected, taking not so much a noise angle but a more sickened tone in their frequencies. This is an intensely harsh listen - but I do mean this in a good manner. While the previous recordings took a bit more structured pummeling rhythmic focus this has veered off into harsh electronic/ ambient territory. Selected tracks included sections of distorted industrial beats but this focus remains somewhat subdued. People familiar with Statvm's sound will find the distinctive tones are still present it is just the style has been slightly altered. The distorted vocals and voice samples of previous efforts are also absent, but in no way does this detract from the overall effect. The opener "Nerve Short Circuit" lulls the listener into a false sense of relaxation before the distorted frequencies leap out to wreak havoc on the listeners cerebral area. The ambient noise of "Intravenous Pain Injection" which could not be described as true noise, the ever incessant mid to high pitched static certainly reflect the track's title. Some parallels in the overall background structure can be made with the latest raison d'être CD, which gives rise to the question - which project is inspiring the other? There are no real standout tracks as all are of a high quality and they work well as a complete body of sound over a 70 minute length. This is pinnacle of technological decadence put to sound, being an impressive addition to the catalogue of the productive Peter Anderson & Co.



Various Artists (Wld) "Death Odors II" CD 1997 Slaughter Productions
Compilation CD's are always an unusual thing. On one hand they can showcase a wide variety of artists but can lack focus and direction. On the other hand they can work extremely well as a complete body of work, without appearing to have the contribution of many individuals. In the case of this release it falls somewhere in between. Common threads of sound and structure are evident but it also works well to showcase both known and unknown groups. Opening with a track "The Final Day": from 'Megaptera', I find it annoying that it is only an except as I have had the pleasure of hearing the complete track on a 'Fever Pitch' sampler cassette.

Low droning base rumbles while minimalist monk type samples are interjected occasionally. This except version concludes just prior to the track exploding into rhythmic death industrial, so if you want to hear the track in its entirety you will have to also purchase the "Beautiful Chaos" MCD! Up next is well known and respected 'raison d'être'. Using the 'less is more' concept Peter continues the themes touched upon on his latest CD. The track is quite minimal in structure with multi-layered slabs of organic sound and treated keyboards. The result is no less than what we have come to expect from this artist - a track which hauntingly dark yet extremely beautiful. The 'Deutch Nepal' track opens with a quirky keyboard melody with the input/ collaboration from 'No Festival of Light' being quite evident when a bass heavy looping sample comes clattering into the mix. This continues throughout the remaining 10 minutes while keyboards and the trademark distorted vocals of Lina pop in for a visit. All in all not a bad track but tends not to hold my interest for its whole length, given its repetitive nature. 'Archon Satani' don't do anything other than what has been showcased on his latest and final releases with a track of the trademark low-fi 'void' type ambience. Although quite standard still worthy of a mention. The next track "dark territory" being my first encounter with 'Negrü Voda' (a Megaptera side project) I am highly impressed. What we have here is noisy and harsh death industrial at its best! Agonizing high pitch squeals introduce this before a factory noise 'beat' surges into the mix and are gradually overlaid to meld into pummeling f i n a l l y .

'Statvm Terror' (another raison d'être side project) are included with an unusually titled track called 'Another Thong'. The project being more industrial and technology oriented, the track has quite a lot going on. With the basic structure of layered sound a variety of looping samples and mid paced beats blend in and out of the song's m a k e u p . Heading into the second half of the disc the names of the groups become less familiar and I can't say I have heard any of their collective outputs before. For a quick rundown 'Soldnergeist' feature a pretty standard looping death industrial track with repeated vocal samples to boot. 'Discipline' take a more neo classical approach and although not a bad track, they have a fair way to go before this would stand up next to 'In Slaughter Natives' of 'The Protagonist'. 'No Festival of Light' have their own track included here and while their sound is fairly unique within the ambient definition (somewhat like early 'Archon Satani' but less organic and more beat/ keyboard oriented) it is not more than slightly above average. 'Memoria's' track seems to lack focus over the first half with sporadic factory industrial sounds, which is held together better when a 'raison d'être' type keyboard passage is used. From the second half of this track this might be a group to keep an eye on. 'Crepuscule' who hail from America sound distinctively European with comparisons to be made to early MZ 412, with a track of rumbling bass and tortured samples and vocals. Rounding out the CD is 'Keimverbreitung' from Italy with a cavernous ambient sound not unlike 'Tombstone' (also from Italy). Light tunes from a piano and wood wind instrument float in the background of the mix avoiding being the focal

p o i n t . In conclusion this is a good CD which features well known and well worn artists amongst upcoming talent. With deluxe packaging this comes with a good recommendation.



Various Artists (Wld) "The Absolute Supper" DCD 1997 Cold Meat Industry
The reasoning behind this deluxe double gatefold digi pack release is the celebration of CMI's 10th anniversary/ 50th release. With 20 groups spanning two discs, 22 tracks and 2 hours & 14 minutes this could turn into a marathon review. This is exactly why I will try to keep this short and sweet! The whole range of CMI's "sound" can be found here from the lo-fi floating ambience to structured neo classical industrial through to harsh grating death industrial. The well known groups, In Slaughter Natives, Ordo Equilibrio, Sanctum, Puissance, Arcana, Mortis, Raison D'être, Brighter Death Now and Archon Satani all put in solid and impressive efforts.

Newcomers to the label being The Protagonist, Sephiroth, Hazard, Megaptera, Frozen Faces and Nacht all have really impressive tracks. *(By newcomers I mean that they are new to having music released on CMI with their current projects - this also excludes the involvement in previous p r o j e c t s) . The remaining groups Desiderii Marginis, Frozen Faces, MZ412, Deutch Nepal, Ildfrost and Cintecele Diavolvi are also worthy of a mention. All I can say is that anyone with no interest in the ambient/ industrial scene would still find something to like here. Priced as a single CD and with detailed information of the history of the label and groups included, you can't go wrong. Do not hesitate to purchase this extremely well presented and well realized release.



Vond (Swe) "The Dark River" CD 1996 Shiva Darshana
Mortis has definitely lost the plot. With all the hype that has surrounded him over the past few years it appears he has lost any inkling of self criticism. Here he is back with his second full length by the side project Vond. While normally

I have enjoyed Mortii's previous works under whatever name, I can no longer say this is the case. He seems to be churning out whatever he records without giving it much thought to if it is of quality or not. This Vond CD has average songs (of the ones that sound decent sound more like Fata Morgana than Vond), shit vocals on two tracks and blatant mistakes in track 4 (take a listen, you can hardly miss it). The title track is an attempt at a dark ambient piece (ie no keyboards, just low rumblings, vocals and predictably the sound of running water). This comes off really weak and I find myself jumping for the skip button.

For a bit of advice Mortii needs to simply practice his compositions a bit more before recording so he can get all of the keys played in time, not a milli second off (as is the case here), which has resulted in an amateurish sound. Hence again the comments on self criticism. Musically he can write good songs but stylistically and technically his playing of the keyboard leaves a bit to be desired. Furthermore Mortii obviously has not studied economic rationalism as he would realise that the consolidation of his projects would result in a stronger unit that is more varied and diverse. Granted not everything he writes would fit the music under the Mortii banner, but having four side projects is testing the fans loyalty a bit much. Some will say this is great simply because it is from the hand of Mortii (probably why Shivarashana licensed it) but I am going to be more skeptical of his outputs from now on. I just fully hope that this disease is limited only to this second Vond CD and that Mortii will prove me wrong with future releases, but at this point I am just finding it hard to swallow this piece of dross.



Vond (Swe) "Green Eyed Demon" 1997
Extreme Subterranea
After reading the above review of Vond's previous disc I gather you are wondering why I would even bother with this. When this first came out I had absolutely no wish to purchase this however when Jason at Malignant Records gave this a good recommendation I could not resist. (note: Jason has always had a general distaste for all of Mortii's outputs, so when he said this was good I was willing to take this on face value). If anyone gave this to me to try and guess who it was, Mortii would have been the last person I would have picked. Gone is the heavy keyboard basis replaced with a 'death ambient/ industrial' sound. The album is broken up into seven tracks with five being structured pieces with the final two being short vocal samples. The disc begins with a low frequency track that rumbles along with some sort of vocals buried underneath the various layers of distortion. The track also includes dialogue detailing the process

involved the electric chair execution of a condemned individual. This track is generally limited to a dark repetitive hum while although track two begins much the same ends up more varied due to the layered structure. Again a story/ dialogue samples of a necrophile/ cannibal/ serial killer is included which I believe was taken from an old movie entitled "Deranged". Track three ups the disc another notch with a cavernous sound complemented with a slow rhythmic foundation. Various vocals are again included to encompass a good effect. Track four "to the dreamer dead & the dreamer dying" is the closest this disc gets to previous outputs of Vond however the new styled dark ambient backbone is retained with light keyboards included as a backdrop. Further a 'Raison D'etre' like chant/ choir has been sampled. When this track picks up it mildly soars with its orchestral composition (which still has the slight Mortii like sound). It has been quite a while since music has really unnerved me however the final 'musical track' on this disc ("beyond hope): Hell starts Now" really hit a nerve on the first few listens. With its extreme blugoning layered vocals & sound it actually coming off somewhat like "Brighter Death Now's" new musical approach. This release (along with the new & improved sound and structure that Mortii portrays on his track on the "The Absolute Supper" compilation) I can finally say that we will yet see some true quality from the Mortii camp.

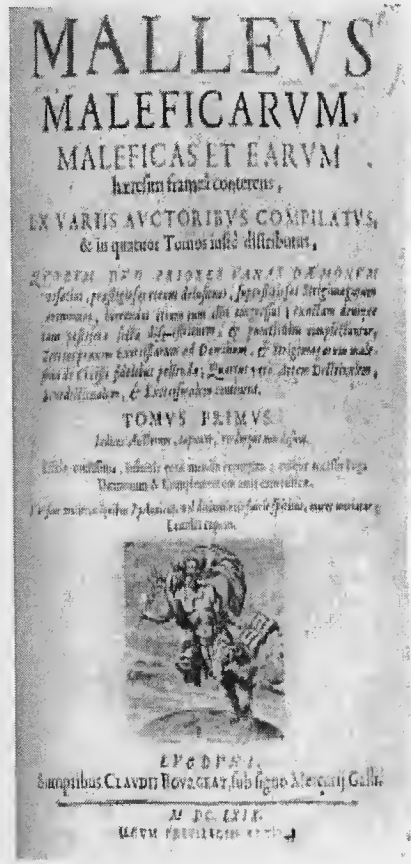
Wejdas (Lit) "Wejdas" CD 1998 Red Stream
Containing only three tracks over 47 minutes we are subjected to lengthy passages of unusual pagan/medieval/ folk styled 'new ageish' music. Starting off with a promising keyboard passage the scene is set whilst low chanting vocals rise in the background. After about 4 minutes this fades out to be replaced by various field recordings of "nature" sounds intermixed with light beats, sections of keys and slow drumming, treated vocals and other sounds, all generally kept to the background. The way this is presented gives the listener the feel they are listening to a movie without being able to see the images. The direction of the sounds tends to be quite sporadic and unfocused which doesn't help it to retain full interest. Heading to the 30 minute mark of the opener the original keyboard passage is reintroduced to take the track to its conclusion. The shorter 10 minute track two has an unusual electronically treated rhythm that is not unlike some of the left of centre quirky tracks Deutch Nepal has produced. Remaining structured and repetitive the track cyclically moves through its sounds that sees a flute run included towards the end for good measure. The final track is very dreamy and new age styled complete with a sorrowful wind instrument passage. One gripe that I have is that I find the use of electronically created sounds tends to detract from the overall aesthetic of which is trying to be created. By trying to project a sound of the past the electronic sounds tend to be too sterile. Possibly if the keyboard instruments were made to sound more authentic this would not be as much of a problem. As interesting CD nonetheless that certainly showcases creative ideas.

Yen Pox (USA) "Blood Music" CD 1996
Malignant Records
After a tape release and 7" I believe that this is the groups first offering on CD. Yen Pox create what is coined as 'dark ambience' which is an

over simplistic yet relevant term. I don't think what is on this disc could be called music as such but should rather be referred to as atmospheres. Predominantly minimalistic in style, noises and sounds flow and evolve over the length of the six track, 70 minute disc. This is similar in what is on offer from another dark ambient project 'Lustmord' but the sounds present here have a more 'wet' underwater element. No keyboards are used, rather source material recording are processed by electronic means to create the ambience on offer. Besides this point of being created from an electronic medium the atmospheres sound very natural, evoking arcane visions and primal fears of something utterly dark, yet hidden & incomprehensible.



For anyone not skilled in listening to this form of ambience will ultimately call this release boring due to it's minimalistic nature, but it is not something that you listen directly to. Put this CD on in the background or while you go to sleep and let it grow and evolve around you to gain the full effect.
Yen Pox with "Blood Music" definitely prove they are a force to be reckoned with in the dark ambient realm, as is the up and coming label "Malignant Records" who have released this gem.



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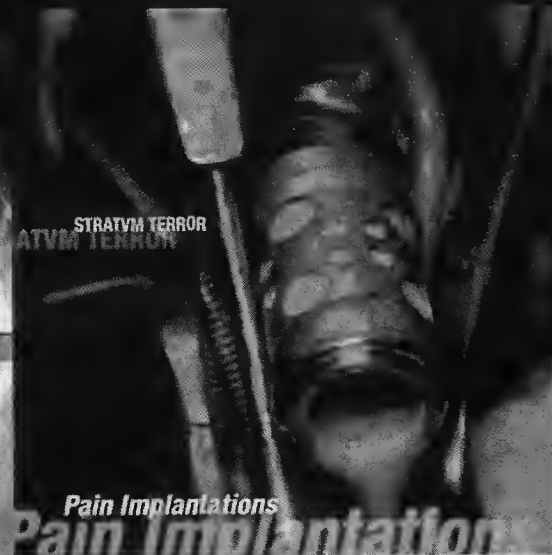
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